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Constantine THE GREAT

LLOYD B. HOLSAPPLE

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FROM DIOCLETIAN TO CONSTANTINE

YEAR	EAST	WEST
284	Diocletian	Carinus
285	Diocletian (Maximian, Caesar after June)	
286	Diocletian (Jovius)	Maximian (Herculius)
293	Diocletian, Augustus Galerius, Caesar	Maximian, Augustus Constantius, Caesar
305	(Diocletian, retired) Galerius, Augustus Maximin Daia, Caesar	(Maximian, retired) Constantius, Augustus Severus, Caesar
306	Galerius, Augustus Maximin Daia, Caesar	Severus, Augustus Constantine, Caesar (Maxentius, usurper at Rome)
307	Galerius, Augustus Maximin Daia, Caesar	Constantine Maximian Maxentius All claim title of Augustus
308–310	Galerius, Augustus Maximin Daia, Augustus	Licinius, Augustus Constantine, Augustus (Maxentius, usurper) (Maximian, removed)
310–311	Galerius (d. May, 311) Maximin Daia	Licinius Constantine (Maxentius, usurper)
311–313	Maximin Daia	Licinius Constantine
313–324	Licinius	Constantine
324–337	Constantine, Sole Emperor	

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

I. Gold Medallion of Constantine the Great *Frontispiece*

Obverse. CONSTANTINUS AUG. Constantinus Aug(ustus). Diademed head of Constantine the Great, with chin raised and uplifted eyes typical of the period; border of dots.
Reverse. VIRTUS D. N. CONSTANTINI AUG. Virtus d(omini) n(ostri) Constantini Aug(usti), "The Valor of our Lord, Constantine Augustus."
Constantine walking to the right with a spear in his right hand, he carries a trophy over his left shoulder, and thrusts his left foot against a captive seated in an attitude of distress.
In exergue SIS. Sis(ciae), "Siscia." (A town in Pannonia where there was an Imperial mint.)
Gold medallion. 4½ solidi. 37 mm. 20.7 gr.
(Cohen, *Medailles Imperiales,* 2nd ed., Vol. VII, p. 311, No. 688; Gnecchi, *Medaglioni Romani,* 1912 (no illustration of this piece), p. 21, No. 64. Baldwin, A., *Five Roman Gold Medallions,* Amer. Num. Soc., 1921.)
This unique piece is in the Pierpont Morgan Collection. Cast for the picture courtesy of the American Numismatic Society.

II. Cisterns at Constantinople 324

III. Constantine the Great 361

From a colossal head in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome.

IV. Map of the Roman Empire at the Time of Its Greatest Extent *Last Page*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Age of Constantine. Its religious significance paramount. Reasons for the frequent neglect of this period. The legendary Constantine. The frescoes at San Silvestro. Persistence and influence of the legendary Constantine. Wide diversity of interpretations of Constantine by modern historians. The sources for his life. Their value. The real Constantine must be seen against the background of his times and in relation to the earlier history of the Empire and the Church. *Pages 1–10*

Chapter I

THE EMPIRE BEFORE DIOCLETIAN

The Empire of Augustus. What made its establishment possible. Its characteristics and aims. The Julio-Claudians. The Flavians. The Five Good Emperors. Hereditary succession introduced by Marcus Aurelius. The Severi. The absolute monarchy on a military foundation. The short-lived restoration of the Senate. St. Cyprian on the disorders of the Third Century. The Thirty Tyrants. The Illyrian Emperors. Carus, Carinus, and Numerian. The situation which led to the accession of Diocletian. The major problems which confronted both Diocletian and Constantine. The impossibility of achieving a balance of power between the Senate and the army. The real significance of this problem. The problem of the succession in the principate. The economic problem. What preserved the unity of the Empire. The government and the influence of the towns. The collapse of the towns and the need for new policies and methods. *Page 11–39*

Chapter II

THE CHURCH BEFORE DIOCLETIAN

The religious revival under Augustus. The origins of emperor-worship. The progress of the Church. The persecution under Nero. The policy of Trajan. Persecutions between the time of Trajan and that of Decius. The aims of Julia Domna. Elgabal and Severus Alexander. The renewed popularity of Oriental Cults. The rites of Cybele and Mithras. The rise of Neo-Platonism. The definitely religious persecution under Decius. The witness of St. Cyprian and of Dionysius of Alexandria. The persecution under Valerian. The rescript of Gallienus and the long period of peace for the Church. The effects of the peace. Progress and obstacles encountered by the Church. Manichaeism and its teachings. Heresies and sects. Gnosticism and Montanism. The expansion of the Church through the Empire. Its weaknesses. *Pages 40–64*

Chapter III

DIOCLETIAN AND THE LAST PERSECUTION

The tale told by Vopiscus of Diocletian's ambition. The conflict with Carinus. The Orientalizing of the principate. The reform of the army and the new division of the Empire. The question of the succession decided by the appointment of Maximian as Caesar. Jovius and Herculius. M. Aurelius Maximinianus proclaimed Augustus, 286. The revolt of Carausius. Galerius and Constantius Chlorus appointed Caesars, 293. Two dynastic houses constituted. The character of the two Caesars. The defeat of Galerius by the Persians and his subsequent victory. Constantius restores Britain to the Empire. After reigning for nearly nineteen years Diocletian undertakes the persecution of the Christians. His own attitude and the influence of Galerius. Why did Diocletian wait so long before initiating the persecution? The state of the Church at the outbreak of the persecution. The testimony of

Eusebius. The effects of the victory of Galerius over the Persians in 298. A purge of the army. Galerius the "Beast." Influence of the Neo-Platonists. The conference at Nicomedia. Did the Christians plot the death of Galerius? The destruction of the Cathedral church at Nicomedia and the inauguration of the persecution, February 23, 303. The burning of the Scriptures and the origin of the *traditor*. "More victories over Goths and Sarmatians!" The fires in the palace at Nicomedia. Who was responsible? The first two edicts sent to the West. The persecution under Maximian and Constantius. The victims in the East. Diocletian's Vicennalia, 303 and the promulgation of the third edict. Diocletian's illness at Rome. Diocletian politically dead during the year 304. Did Galerius force the abdication of Diocletian? Abdication of the Augusti, May 1, 305. Constantius and Galerius become Augusti; Severus and Maximin Daia Caesars. Diocletian's retirement. His achievements. The palace at Salona. *Pages 65–105*

Chapter IV

THE YOUNG CONSTANTINE

Constantine's birth and childhood. The character and career of his father. Helena, his mother. Legends of Helena and of Constantine's youth. A distinguished ancestry. Constantine at the court of Diocletian and in the army. His marriage to Minervina. His natural resentment at being passed over in the choice of Caesars. His early impressions of the Christians in the East. Constantine summoned by his father. His escape from the court of Galerius. Constantine and his father in Britain. The death of Constantius at York, July 25, 306. Constantine proclaimed Augustus by the army. His recognition as Caesar by Galerius. His personal appearance. Roman Britain at the beginning of the fourth century. Constantine's victory over the Franks. The vanquished thrown to wild beasts at Treves. His activities during the first five years of his reign as Caesar in the West. *Pages 106–126*

Chapter V

MAXENTIUS THE SON OF MAXIMIAN

The revolt at Rome and the usurpation of Maxentius. He nominates his father to serve as Augustus for the second time. The ill-fated expedition of Severus. The expedition of Galerius. Maximian at the court of Constantine. Severus put to death. The Spanish provinces declare for Maxentius. Maximian at Rome. The rupture between the father and the son. Maximian returns to Constantine, 308. The conference at Carnuntum. "Sons of Augustus." Seven bear the title of Augustus, 308. Benefactions of Maxentius at Rome. His attitude towards the Christians. Rebellion in Africa. Maximian returns to Constantine in Gaul: Constantine advances against the Franks. Maximian assumes the purple for the third time. His perfidy in relation to Constantine. Reasons for Maximian's treachery. The claim of Constantine's descent from Claudius Gothicus advanced. The significance of this claim. Constantine recovers Spain; disorders at Rome; revolt in Africa suppressed for Maxentius by Rufus Volusianus, 311. Death of Galerius, May, 311. His edict of toleration and its significance. Maxentius evidently claims the entire West. Inevitability of a conflict with Constantine. *Pages 127–148*

Chapter VI

CONSTANTINE AND MAXENTIUS

The situation at the death of Galerius. Unpopularity of Maxentius at Rome. The aims of Constantine. The alliance with Licinius: Maxentius makes an alliance with Maximin Daia. The size of the two armies and the disadvantages of Constantine. The preparations of Maxentius. Constantine advances into northern Italy and seizes Susa. His victory over Ruricius Pompeianus at Verona. The advance to Saxa Rubra. Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge.

His triumphal entry into Rome. The triumphal arch of Constantine and its inscription. *Pages 149–162*

Chapter VII

CONSTANTINE'S CONVERSION

What is meant by the phrase, "by divine suggestion"? Conflicting accounts of Lactantius and Eusebius. Dream or vision? Did Constantine accept the God of the Christians or a luck-token? Trustworthiness of Eusebius' account of the vision. Constantine prone to look for signs. Pagan accounts of his conversion. What was the significance of this phrase to Constantine himself? Significance of the *labarum*. The validity of Constantine's conversion; its limitations. *Pages 163–174*

Chapter VIII

THE EDICT OF MILAN

The text as given by Lactantius and Eusebius. The conditions in the edict of Galerius. The vague agnostic phrase. The principle of freedom of conscience. The origin of this novel principle. Contrast between religious tolerance and freedom of conscience. Constantine's motive. His apparent inconsistency in practice. Freedom of conscience in Maryland colony and in modern times. Denial of the existence of an Edict of Milan. No edict may have issued from Milan but principles were decided there. Evidence of Constantine's attitude towards the Church in his acts immediately after his victory over Maxentius. Marriage of Licinius to Constantia, half-sister of Constantine, February, 313. Improbable tale of the unkindness of Constantine and Licinius to Diocletian which caused his death. Conference of Licinius and Constantine with regard to jurisdiction. Constantine called away to suppress a Frankish rebellion; Licinius recalled to the East by the advances of Maximin Daia. The gift of the Lateran Palace. *Pages 178–193*

Chapter IX

CONSTANTINE AND THE SCHISM IN THE CHURCH

The origin of the Donatist schism—*confessors* and *traditors.* The astuteness of Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage. The election of Caecilianus disputed. Introduction of a heresy that the acts of a *traditor* are invalid. The Council of the Numidian Bishops at Cirta (Constantine). Constantine writes to Anullinus and makes a distinction between Catholics and schismatics. The petition to Constantine, 313. Constantine determines on a court of trial, which is converted into a Council by the Pope. The Council at the Lateran Palace. Constantine's letter to Aelafius. Disturbances at Carthage. The Council of Arles, August, 314. Constantine in conflict with Licinius. Caecilianus and Donatus, detained in Italy, return to Carthage. Fourth investigation at Milan, November, 316. Disorders in Africa. Final investigation at Timgad, 320. The spread of the Donatist schism and violence of its adherents. The *Circumcelliones.* Constantine's errors in dealing with the schism. *Pages 194–211*

Chapter X

CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS

The advance of Maximin Daia to Byzantium and Heraclea. The dream of Licinius and the prayer to assure victory. Daia defeated by Licinius. His escape to Nicomedia and his death at Tarsus. Licinius ruler of the East. Harsh treatment and death of Diocletian's wife and daughter. Death of Diocletian and end of the Jovian dynasty, 316. Character and attainments of Licinius. Bassianus made a Caesar. The revolt of Senecio. First conflict between Constantine and Licinius, 314. Who initiated it? Defeat of Licinius at Cibalae—and at Castra Mardiensis. Concessions granted by Licinius. Nine years of peace between the Augusti. Constantine's activities during that period. Causes of the second outbreak of hostilities between Constantine and Licinius. The relative strength of the two Augusti. The battle at Adrianople. Licinius at Byzantium. The naval victory of Crispus. Final defeat of Licinius at Chrysopolis. The fate of Licinius and Martinianus. Constantine sole ruler of the Empire, 324. *Pages 212–232*

Chapter XI

THE END OF THE PERSECUTION

The fourth edict issued by Maximian when Diocletian was politically dead. Fresh persecutions in the East. Theotecnus the adviser of Daia. The substitution of mutilation for death. The *Martyrs of Palestine*. The fifth edict, 308. The toleration edict of Galerius. Daia's interpretation of the edict. Daia's encouragement of petitions against the Christians. The martyrdom of Lucian of Antioch. The rescript of Daia inscribed on pillars. Theotecnus and the Winking Jupiter. The *Acts of Pilate*. Daia's attempts to rehabilitate paganism. Sir W. Ramsay's conclusions regarding the persecution in the East and its results. The inscription of Julius Eugenius at Laodicea Combusta. Daia's enforcement of the Edict of Milan. The anti-Christian tendencies of Licinius. His persecution of the Christians. The victory of Constantine over Licinius brings the persecution of the Christians in the East to an end. The extent of the persecution. *Pages 233–254*

Chapter XII

CONSTANTINE AND THE HERESY OF THE ARIANS

A Christian heresy that involved the fundamental teachings of the Church. Its origins in the past. Lucian of Antioch the real author of the heresy. Arius and Alexander. The bishops in the East support Arius. The means employed to popularize the teaching of Arius. The *Thalia*. Constantine sends Hosius of Cordova to Alexandria. Constantine's attitude towards the heretical teaching. Constantine decides on an

Oecumenical Council. The Council of Nicaea. The adoption of a formula. The *homoousion*. Constantine's Vicennalia. Eusebius of Caesarea pronounces the Panegyric. The exile of the recalcitrant bishops. The survival of the heresy. Athanasius elected Bishop of Alexandria. The renewal of the struggle. The return from exile and influence of Eusebius of Nicomedia. The return of Arius. The synods of Antioch and Jerusalem. The banishment of Eustathius of Antioch. Constantine intervenes in the choice of his successor. The charges of the Eusebians against Athanasius. The Councils at Caesarea and at Tyre. "Has God given any man more than two hands?" Athanasius accosts Constantine at Constantinople. The exile of Athanasius. Arius at Constantinople. The deposition of Marcellus of Ancyra. The sudden death of Arius. Constantine's errors in his attempt to deal with heresy. The subsequent history of Arianism; its vitality. The true significance of the conflict. *Pages 255–284*

Chapter XIII

CONSTANTINE'S MURDERS

Constantine at Rome for his Vicennalia. His unhappiness; its causes. His edict in favor of informers. The Ides of Quintilis. The situation in Constantine's household. The deaths of Crispus and Fausta. The contemporary evidence. The couplet of Ablavius. Various interpretations of the evidence. Relation of the emperor's mother to the murders. The evidence of the coinage. A probable interpretation of the evidence. *Pages 285–301*

Chapter XIV

CONSTANTINE AND HIS CITY

The significance of Constantine's choice of a site for the new capital. Reasons why a new capital in the East was needed. Other emperors had realized this need, but none attempted to satisfy it. To what extent were Constantine's motives reli-

gious? Other situations that were considered. The history of Byzantium from its origin to the time that Constantine chose it for his capital. The legendary history of the founding of the new capital. Constantine's policy regarding paganism in the new capital. The dedication of the city, 330. The spirit of the new capital. Its distinctive buildings. The Churches. The Hippodrome. The remains of Constantine's city in modern times. Byzantine culture and civilization.
Pages 302–327

Chapter XV

CONSTANTINE'S LAST YEARS

Constantine's arrangements for Constantinople and his life there. The military activities of his later years. The defeat of the Goths. The revolt of the Limigantes. The rise of insignificant pretenders in 335. Renewal of troubles with Persia. The tale related by Zosimus. The letter of Constantine to Sapor II. The beginning of hostilities. Hannibalianus appointed King of Armenia. Constantine's nephew Delmatius given a Balkan territory. Constantine's Tricennalia, 335. The Oration of Eusebius. The so-called Oration of Constantine. Its value for the historian. Constantine reported to have completed his dynastic arrangements. Eusebius' estimate of the character of the three sons of Constantine. Events of Constantine's last two years. His final illness. His visit to Drepanum. His baptism. "Clinics." Constantine's death, May 22, 337. His funeral. His deification in the West and his canonization by the Church of the East. *Pages 328–348*

Chapter XVI

CONSTANTINE'S BENEFACTIONS

The concessions granted the Christians by Constantine immediately after his victory over Maxentius. The principles that guided his actions during the period before his victory over Licinius. The change in his policy after he became sole em-

peror. His activities in the building of churches in the Holy Land. The pilgrimage of Helena and Eutropia. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The building of churches at Rome. A novel theory regarding the churches built by Constantine. His secular buildings at Rome. His legal enactments in favor of the Christians. His social legislation. *Pages 349–366*

Chapter XVII

THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

The development of the legend of Constantine's baptism at Rome. The *Vita Silvestri.* A modern theory with regard to this legendary material. The *Constitutum.* Its incorporation in the False Decretals. Its general acceptance in the Middle Ages. Its probable origin. Various theories regarding the Donation and the Decretals. Neither of these documents associated in its origin with the Papacy. *Pages 367–380*

Chapter XVIII

CONSTANTINE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Constantine has been regarded as a continuator rather than as an originator. The originality of his achievements. Difficulty of distinguishing his work from that of Diocletian at certain points. Yet Constantine's contribution more radical and far-reaching. The reorganization of the imperial household. The reforms in provincial government. The organization of the bureaucracy which became characteristic of the later Byzantine Empire. The reorganization of the army. His monetary policy. His methods of taxation. The crystallization of society. The *coloni.* The fate of the *decurions.* The difficulties in the way of good government. Constantine accused of harshness in his legislation. Many of his enactments, although well-meant, brought on abuses and even greater evils than those they sought to correct. The security of the frontiers. Some of his benefactions to the Church produced baneful results. The beginnings of the feudal system. *Pages 381–399*

Chapter XIX

THE REAL CONSTANTINE

Essential considerations for a just estimate of Constantine's character. Reasons for the unfair judgments of many modern historians. The defamation of his character began with Julian the Apostate. Julian's flippant charges against his uncle. The testimony of Constantine's contemporaries. His outstanding virtues and vices. He should be judged by the standards of his age and in contrast with the other Emperors of the time. An attempt to paint the actual Constantine as he was.

Pages 400–421

Chapter XX

CONSTANTINE AND THE CHURCH

The various schools of thought regarding Constantine's relation to the Church that have arisen during the past hundred years. The main sources for determining the nature of this relation. His actions showed a definite policy, as did his laws. The evidence of the coinage. His generally accepted letters provide the most personal evidence. The evidence of his letters written between the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the victory over Licinius. Two edicts and the letters that were written after the defeat of Licinius. The evidence of the letters produced by the Arian controversy. The charge that he did not distinguish between Sol Invictus Comes and Christ. The evidence of the Passion of the Five Sculptors. The defects in Constantine's grasp of Christian teaching to be attributed largely to his teachers. Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia. Lactantius and Hosius of Cordova. Constantine's interpretation of his office as "Bishop of those outside the Church." The Letter to Sapor. His interference with the prerogatives of the Pope. His resort to exile as a penalty and his interference with the election of a bishop. Constantine as a Congregation of the Index. The reality of Constantine's conversion despite his apparent inconsistency and inadequate understanding of Christian teaching. The verdict of J. S. Mill—its inadequacy. Constantine was the first Christian Emperor. *Pages 422–433*

Chapter XXI

AFTER CONSTANTINE

The events that followed immediately after Constantine's death. The sons of Constantine. Julian the Apostate really liberated the bishops. Jovian, Valentinian I, Valens, Gratian, and Theodosius. The beginnings of the schism between East and West in the Church. The influence of Constantine on Church and Empire in the ages that followed. *Pages 444–454*

Introduction

THE REAL CONSTANTINE AND THE FICTITIOUS

WHY SHOULD ONE attempt to write another life of Constantine? Many books have been written about him in the past and the amount of new material that has become available in recent times that can in any way modify or increase our knowledge of him is negligible. The answer is the vast amount of ignorance regarding him among generally well-informed people. The period of Constantine is very important in itself, as well as significant for its influence in the making of the Europe that we know—the Europe that seems now to be on the verge of dissolution. The period that saw the final breakdown of the Roman Empire and the rise of the new capital on the Bosphorus saw also the development of a new type of monarchy, set in a new framework destined to survive for a thousand years. A period of great material loss witnessed the incipient stages of serfdom and barbarian invasion; it witnessed also the rise of the great empire of the East which was to be a center of civilization and culture as well as the barrier against destructive inroads from the more remote East for centuries. It was marked by the inspiration of that great Christian city which was to withstand the constantly recurring assaults of Islam.

Yet of far greater significance is the religious aspect of this period. The age of the beginning of the Christian Empire, of the Fathers of the Church and the great Oecumenical Councils, is an age of spiritual recovery, which is essential for the understanding of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. This period, which has been so sadly neglected because it falls between what is commonly known as Antiquity and the rise of the modern European nations, has by many been accorded only a brief survey, and then relegated to the category of the unimportant and negligible. Moreover, many of its most thorough and competent students have been men who had scant sympathy with its religious achievements, and they have been either free-thinkers or anti-Christian in outlook; and have, therefore, concentrated their best efforts on the purely material, the economic and social aspects of this era, whereas its chief significance is religious.

It is no mean achievement to establish a new capital in a situation unsurpassed for the military and commercial control which it affords. Still more significant is it to have given the government established at this new capital the form and the spirit which enabled it to preserve a great civilization and a great culture intact for more than a millennium, and then finally to succumb while still resisting stubbornly to the end. But these achievements are incomparably less far-reaching than the declaration for the Christian religion for the first time by a Roman emperor, which gave impetus and freedom for expansion to the persecuted Church of Christ; which made it in a short time the all-powerful influence in the shaping of the civilization of the barbarous peoples of the West as well as of the peoples of the East who preserved the inheritance of the great classical civilization of the past. This record of accomplishment should suffice to indicate the importance of Constantine for Europe and for the world.

Experience has demonstrated that large numbers of people have retained a very accurate knowledge of the history of the ancient world and of its outstanding figures, have perhaps made a relatively thorough study of the history of the modern nations of western Europe, yet their knowledge of Constantine is not only uncertain and incomplete, but frequently limited to bits of legend rather than of actual history. Legends about Constantine seem to have begun to develop even during his lifetime and, ere long, they attained such importance as completely to overshadow the historic records. Deliberate falsifications perverted both the deeds and the character of the great emperor in the years that followed his death. In many instances the legendary figure won wider acceptance than the historic. Without question it was a purely fictitious Constantine that was most widely known and exerted the deepest influence during the Middle Ages. It should not, then, be surprising to find today large numbers of people who have forgotten the facts which they perhaps once knew regarding the history of the fourth century, but who have preserved instead some lingering traces of the legendary figure who was so potent in the thought of mediaeval Europe.

Several times I have ascended the steps that lead to the fortress-like church of the Santi Quattro Incoronati, at Rome. There I have visited the tiny chapel of San Silvestro which stands in the court in front of the church. On the walls of this chapel is the rather crude series of frescoes which depict a familiar story of Constantine. In the first picture one sees the Emperor suffering from leprosy as the result of his persecution of the Christians. The physicians have prescribed a bath in the blood of children as the cure for his malady. With kindly pity he is seen dismissing the mothers who have brought to him their children to be slaughtered to provide this bath. Then he is portrayed as he receives a visit in a dream from St. Peter and St. Paul on the following night. The apostles bid him send for Pope Sylvester to administer the one certain cure for his ailment. We next see the emperor's emissaries as they discover Pope Sylvester in his place of concealment on Mount

Soracte. The following picture represents the Pope as he shows the emperor the authentic portraits of the two apostles, in which he recognizes the very forms that had appeared to him in his dream. The emperor, in his ignorance, regards the two apostles as gods who claim his worship. Next is depicted the emperor's baptism. He is standing in an ample font with a background of fantastic architecture. Finally the Pope is seen seated on a throne receiving a tiara from the hands of the emperor who kneels before him.

The legend of Constantine depicted in these frescoes would appear to contain no element of historic truth beyond the fact that there was a Pope Sylvester between the years 314 and 335, that is during the period that followed Constantine's victory over Maxentius, and that the emperor was baptized. It is quite certain that Constantine was never afflicted with leprosy, and never was prescribed the bath of blood. He was not baptized at Rome, nor by Pope Sylvester. The extraordinary and unaccountable fact is that such a tale should have gained widespread acceptance in the face of the record of his actual baptism as related by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, and further attested by St. Jerome and St. Ambrose. Yet numbers of intelligent and well-informed persons, after gazing at these frescoes, leave the chapel with the impression that the tale, while probably legendary, does, to a certain extent, represent some of the facts of Constantine's life.

The tale set forth in these frescoes, together with certain other episodes, is found in a book called the *Vita Silvestri,* written nearly two hundred years after the pontificate of Sylvester. The legend which it records was of earlier origin and exists in various forms. It found its way into the so-called "Donation of Constantine" which played so important a part in the political history of western Europe in the Middle Ages. So deeply did the Donation influence thought and political theory during the centuries that followed that the eminent student of the era of the barbarian invasions, E. M. Hodgkin, declared that "the story of the Donation of Constantine fully told would almost be the history of the Middle Ages." We shall, in the course of our study of Constantine, attempt to say something of the origin and history of this legend, as well as of the famous False Decretals with which it later became incorporated.

Quite as inexplicable and even more bewildering than the legends that have grown up about the figure of Constantine are the manifold interpretations of Constantine's character, motives, and relation to Christianity and the Church, which have been given by outstanding scholars and biographers since the middle of the eighteenth century. Constantine has emerged from the hands of the scholars in a series of unrelated portraits that seem to have no conceivable connection with one another.

I have aimed in this brief study of Constantine to approach the records free from prejudice and with the single purpose of trying to understand what the actual Constantine was like in his true historic setting. There is a wealth of material either contemporary or from the period immediately after the time of Constantine. In every instance allowance must be made for the prejudices and the limitations of the writers themselves. Yet the material should be sufficient, when due consideration has been given to the peculiar point of view of the particular author, to enable us to know what the historic Constantine did and what he was like. It may be of interest, and may relieve us of constant references to the dependability or prejudice of the individual writer, to mention briefly at the outset our chief authorities.

1. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, was the personal friend and admirer of Constantine. His *Ecclesiastical History,* his *Panegyric on Constantine,* and his *Life of Constantine,* con-

stitute a veritable treasure-house of material. To what extent are we to accept the witness of a bishop whose rôle in the Arian controversy as well as his fulsome adulation of the emperor and his patent exaggeration of Constantine's piety and virtue show him to be a panegyrist, obsequious in his flattery as well as a biased historian? In his *Ecclesiastical History* he states quite clearly that it is his intention to relate rather the virtues of the early Christians than their weaknesses, since he writes for the edification of posterity.

2. Lactantius, teacher of rhetoric and convert to Christianity, wrote his vivid and lively narrative *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* at Nicomedia shortly after the victory of Constantine over Maxentius and the proclamation of religious toleration. He later became the tutor of Crispus, the son of Constantine. The theme of the work *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*—that divine retribution is immediately meted out to the imperial persecutors of the true religion—evinces an unreflective interpretation of history which, combined with the fact that the author cannot have had immediate knowledge of some of the scenes which he so vividly describes, suggest that caution must be exercised in the use of his interesting narrative. Yet, combined with the *Divinae Institutiones,* the major work of "the Christian Cicero," the seventh Book of which is dedicated to Constantine, it gives us an illuminating commentary on the type of Christian teaching that Constantine received and apparently accepted.

These two writers constitute our chief contemporary Christian authorities for the life of Constantine. If they are found to be too lenient towards the Emperor's vices and too extravagant in their praise of his virtues, this can be explained quite simply, since they were writing in the first enthusiasm evoked by the cessation of persecution; and the figure of the Emperor, whose patronage had brought relief from anxiety and suffering, and had inaugurated an era of unprecedented liberty, must needs have appeared in a most favorable light to those whose hearts were filled with gratitude. Among the Christian writers of a slightly later period are St. Augustine and St. Athanasius, the former of whom has left most important material for the understanding of the Donatist schism in North Africa, while the latter is our chief authority for many phases of the Arian controversy and the Council of Nicaea. St. Jerome, in his *Chronicle,* continues the work of the same title by Eusebius, while the later Church historians, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret are the continuators of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Ambrose mention the Finding of the Cross at Jerusalem and are chiefly important because of their nearness in time to the tradition to which they refer.

Among the pagan writers those who are contemporary include:

3. The Panegyrists. The latter part of the third century had seen a revival of Roman rhetoric in Gaul and from that province there have come down to us between the years 289 and 321 A.D. no fewer than fifty-three panegyrics. Among the authors of these panegyrics Eumenius and Nazarius occupy a prominent place. In the use of their material they show little discrimination and amazing credulity. The panegyrics which are pertinent to our subject are:

(a) The panegyric of unknown authorship which was delivered to Maximian and Constantine on the occasion of the marriage of Constantine to Fausta in 307.

(b) The panegyric ascribed to Eumenius delivered at Treves shortly after the execution of Maximian in 310–311.

(c) The official thanks of the citizens for favors bestowed by Constantine upon Autun. This also is possibly by Eumenius, who was at the head of the school at Autun, 311.

(d) The eulogy of Constantine, ascribed to Nazarius, which was delivered at Treves in 313 and contains a short account of Constantine's expedition against Maxentius.

(e) The panegyric, also ascribed to Nazarius, which was delivered at Rome in 321, at which time Constantine was not present. This panegyric contains some important historical facts.

(f) There are also the poetic panegyric and letter to Constantine by Optatian, written in exile for Constantine's Vicennalia, which procured the writer's pardon.

4. Eutropius, who was secretary to Constantine and later the intimate friend of his nephew Julian, wrote a brief compendium of Roman History. This work, which is all but unknown to the American schoolboy, has provided early reading in Latin for the boys of many other countries. It is of real value, for it was written with evident candor and with the obvious aim of providing an unbiased account of the persons and events close to his own time.

The chief pagan historian of the period, Ammianus Marcellinus, would have been a most valuable source for the study of the reign of Constantine, had not the sections of his work that refer to that period perished. The sections that survive provide very little material of importance for the study of Constantine. The fourth-century work that has come to us under the name of Anonymous Valesianus does, however, give us a biography of Constantine which, though brief, is serious and judicious and apparently deserving of a high degree of credence.

The pagan tradition violently hostile to Constantine seems to have had its earliest expression in the writings of his nephew Julian, commonly called "the Apostate." His satire entitled *The Caesars* is of no real value for estimating the character of Constantine, for it was written in a spirit of mockery by one who hated the memory of his uncle and who had abandoned and opposed the religion which his uncle had espoused. The two works that have come down under the name of Sextus Aurelius Victor, an African by birth and a pagan, whom Julian appointed governor of Second Pannonia, are probably by different authors. The *Epitome* appears to be dependent upon the *Caesares* up to the time of Domitian, but for the period that concerns us, there is considerable divergence between the two works. These two works apparently both have made use of the same sources that were used by Count Zosimus, a pagan very hostile to the Christian emperors, who seems to have lived, at least for a part of his life, at Constantinople. His *New History,* though clear and interesting in style, was pronounced even by Gibbon to be biased and undependable.

The other writers to whom we may have occasion to refer are extant only in fragments and can be identified and, where necessary, characterized when reference is made to them. We have, in addition to these sources that have been enumerated, coins, medals and inscriptions, which are frequently regarded as the only certain authority. We have also a large body of laws promulgated by Constantine, which are included in the Theodosian and Justinian Codes. In only a few instances has the authenticity of these laws been seriously questioned. There are also Orations and addresses, letters, edicts and rescripts which purport to come from the hand of Constantine, as well as direct quotations which are recorded as having come from the mouth of the emperor himself.

I have failed to discover any valid reason for rejecting the letters that have been attributed to Constantine by Eusebius, with the possible exception of the letter to Sapor, King of Persia; and, even though this letter may contain elements that make one hesitate to assert its authenticity, I have not found sufficient grounds to reject it with certainty. The letters from

Constantine to Aelafius and to the Council of Arles, contained in Optatus, which were for a time subjected to searching criticism, are now generally accepted as authentic. The late Byzantine writers and the large body of extracts preserved by Photius from those whose works no longer survive in their integrity, while they may at times preserve ancient and trustworthy traditions, are obviously not as dependable as those more nearly contemporary with the events to which they refer. We must, however, regret deeply the loss of the work of Praxagoras of Athens, a pagan who appreciated and admired Constantine.

It is our aim, then, to learn what we can of Constantine the man, of his achievements and of his relation to the Church, from the authorities who were best equipped to give us a true picture of him, distinguishing as far as possible the historic figure from the legendary, and recounting, as the opportunity arises, the legends that have grown up about him and trying to discover the basis of truth or the original misapprehension of fact which gave rise to this legendary material. First it will be necessary for us to trace, as briefly as possible, the history of the Empire and of its vicissitudes, as well as the course of the Church in its relation to the State, during the period from the rise of the Empire under Augustus down to the accession of Diocletian.

Chapter I

THE EMPIRE BEFORE DIOCLETIAN

Save in name and in geographical extent, the Roman Empire of Diocletian and Constantine had little in common with the empire of Octavian, who became sole ruler after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. A little more than three centuries had passed and during that time vast and far-reaching changes had come. There had been some small additions to the extent of the Empire. In the time of Octavian it had embraced the whole continent of Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube, together with North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and most of Asia Minor. Britain had been added under Claudius in A.D. 43 and in the early part of the second century Trajan had annexed Dacia as well as a large territory east of the Euphrates. These expansions of territory, however, were insignificant in comparison with the alteration that had taken place in the institutions of the Empire, its essential character, its problems and its outlook.

When Octavian, who has been known to later ages by the title Augustus, a title which was conferred on him by the Senate, came into possession of the supreme power, it was the result of a long struggle between the Senate and the army. In the course of this struggle the republican traditions of the past had broken down. The conquest of this vast empire had been achieved by the Roman genius for military and political organization, but the positive contribution of Rome to cultural development had been negligible. The Greek city-state, which had been characteristic of the civilization spread in the East by Alexander the Great and his successors, Rome found ready at hand for her use, but in Roman hands it became less an instrument of culture than a tool to be used in a practical and commercial spirit for her own aggrandizement. The plunder of the provinces was not limited to the Roman aristocracy, but was shared by the lesser agents of the powerful financial interests. The Roman Republic, in its final stages, saw not only the ruin of its subject peoples through exploitation but the threat of its own destruction. Senatorial incompetence and venality had brought their own retribution. Julius Caesar sought to bring the struggle between the Senate and military despotism to an end, but he was too precipitate in his methods, for he ignored the privileged position of Senators and Knights as well as the traditional forms of the Roman state and the preeminence of the Roman citizens in the Empire. After his assassination the Senate had not sufficient military support to reestablish the old order of things; hence ensued a military struggle for supreme power in which Octavian was finally victorious over Antony, for the people of Rome and Italy could not submit complacently to the Oriental type of monarchy which Antony would have established.

Octavian believed that it was his vocation to restore the ancient glory of Rome, but he was able to accomplish this only by creating a monarchy which was entirely dependent upon a victorious army and upon the prestige which, despite the fact that he was not a full-fledged aristocrat, he was able to attach to his own person. His aims were quite definite. He established peace within the borders of the Empire; he apparently preserved the time-honored institutions of the past; yet, by the end of his reign, these institutions had become mere fictions. All this was accomplished without adopting any of the externals of royalty. He was known to the citizens of Rome as *princeps,* or first citizen; to the army he was *imperator,* or commander. The *princeps* wields supreme power, not because he is regarded as a descendant of the gods, like the Oriental monarchs, but because he embodies the authority of the Roman people, an absolute authority which has been delegated to him. The *imperator* is the one who possesses by delegation the command of the army, which is also absolute. The *imperium* had been held by various *proconsuls* in the days of the republic, but not permanently; it was held only for the duration of a campaign, and was laid aside immediately after the triumph. Octavian also retained the name of Caesar, which was in reality an acknowledgment that he had inherited the right to command the army from his uncle, Julius Caesar, who, after his death, had been deified. The title Augustus, which the Senate added later, a title which had been applied in the past to certain gods and benefactors of the State, really meant one to whose creative genius was due some increase or improvement in the State, but it also implied that he was holy and sacred, probably because he was the living symbol of the goddess Roma. Among the subjects in the provinces of the East, the title *imperator* also signified one who held absolute power and to whom personally they swore allegiance. But, since the *imperium* had, in the past, been exercised only outside of Rome, it became necessary also that the Senate confer upon Augustus the tribunician power for life, which gave him the right of *intercessio,* or general protection of the Roman people, and rendered his person sacred and inviolable. The tribunician power involved the right to initiate or to veto any laws he might choose. Other offices with special functions were also added to those he thus acquired, such as those of *pontifex maximus,* or head of the state religion, and censor; he also from time to time held the consulship. These titles did not actually increase his power in any important way, but they served to give the impression that the usages of the past were being continued.

Apparently the machinery continued to function as before. The *comitia* had become obsolete, and the administration as well as the treasury had fallen into the hands of the Senate, along with the legislative functions. But, as the emperor's authority increased, this could only be at the expense of the powers of the Senate. Cassius Dio reports that in 24 B.C. the Senate enacted a law in favor of Augustus by which he was freed from the compulsion of the laws and received full liberty of action. Thus, while his powers became absolute, they were delegated powers and the *imperator* really was the impersonation of the Roman state. But the absence of a constitution to define the primal source of authority was certain eventually to produce serious conflict. Was it really the Senate or the army which had the lawful right of initiative? Although the choice of a *princeps* by the Senate would have the greater appearance of legality, the army possessed the necessary force and the office of *imperator* was essentially military.

Augustus avoided using terms or titles which might offend the reverence which the people of Rome had for the institutions of the past. He caused himself to be elected Consul and, after 31 B.C., he held this office with a colleague each year. When, in 27 B.C., he laid aside his extraordinary powers, the Senate insisted on conferring upon him new administrative and military prerogatives which were the essence of the new office of the principate that had now come into being, one that was destined to survive, in very much the form that he gave to it, for nearly two hundred years. It would be quite obvious to Tacitus a century later that Augustus had actually established a monarchy, but to his contemporaries this was not evident.

The army must be the chief support of Augustus. He could not open the legions to all sorts of provincials, as both Julius

Caesar and Antony had done, for prejudices and traditions must be respected. This was a principle that had been essential to the success of his plans. The main body of the army must remain Roman, although in the East provincials might at times be admitted to it. Also the officers must be chosen from the aristocracy. The legions must not be in a position to acquire political power; they were therefore kept on the frontiers, where they were needed; while in Rome itself a new institution was inaugurated, the Praetorian Guard, whose commander, the Praetorian Prefect, and his tribunes were from the class of the Roman Knights, and whose function it was to guard the emperor's person. Military police were also stationed in Rome, as well as the Palatine Guard, which consisted of barbarians, to guard the imperial palace. Augustus also formed a second army, which was composed entirely of provincials, although commanded by Roman Knights, called auxiliaries. Still more revolutionary was the change Augustus made, by deft manipulation arranging that the legions should be almost invariably stationed in his own provinces, thus, when they were combined with the Praetorian Guard, really bringing the military power of the Empire directly under his personal control.

Augustus had developed a machine that would work; at all events it did work for a long time. But he bequeathed many problems to the future—problems that would be very difficult to solve. He had made the principate absolute while at the same time disguising names and forms so that they were inoffensive to Romans who still cherished the traditions of the past. But how was this principate to be continued? He, no doubt, intended that his office should be hereditary but, for want of heirs of his own, he had to resort to adoption and was unable to introduce the hereditary principle. Would it be possible to prevent a large standing army from realizing its political power and from using that power against the security of the principate itself? Would the financial crisis that had been averted not recur in the future? Was the new system sufficient to guarantee the continued unity of the vast Empire? Before the end of Augustus' reign the defeat of Varus in the Teutoburg forest, while not an irreparable disaster, was a grim warning of the troubles that were sure to arise later. It would not be long until the time that the guarding of the frontiers would be a primary concern of the Empire, but none could have foreseen the day when the barbarian element would be dominant in the army and when the principate itself would be held by a succession of barbarians. The revival of religion was an essential element in the political program of Augustus. How incredulous he would have been, had he been told that during his own reign, in a remote corner of the Empire One was being born whose followers would grow in numbers and in power as the Roman Empire declined and that, after two centuries of conflict, they would triumph over the collapsed system which he had inaugurated.

Under the immediate successors of Augustus the system worked smoothly in spite of its unsolved question regarding the succession and the inferior ability of the men who wielded the supreme power. Tiberius, the son of the Empress Livia, not of Augustus, but adopted by Augustus as his successor, seemed to show some reluctance to undertake the office of *imperator*. He was accepted first by the army and only after considerable hesitation by the Senate. He announced at the outset that he did not regard the office as belonging to him for life. Possessed of considerable ability, beset by plots and suspicions, his reign ended in unpopularity and isolation. The next three emperors —Caligula, Claudius and Nero—the first and the last madmen, the second regarded as mentally weak but actually somewhat of a genius—had all been imposed on the Senate by the army; the first of the three by the Spanish legions, the others by the Praetorian Guards. None were directly descended from Augustus, though some semblance of relationship could be claimed; but never did a son succeed his father.

With the death of Nero the fundamentally military basis of the principate and the ineffectiveness of the Senate became obvious. The year 69 A.D., in which there were four emperors and constant civil strife, ended in the establishment of Vespasian, whose position was entirely dependent upon the army. He it was, also, who, in associating with him his son Titus, first inaugurated the principle of hereditary succession, and, by expelling from the Senate unworthy members whose places he filled by provincials, reduced the revered body that had been supreme in the past to absolute subservience. When Domitian, the brother of Titus, was proclaimed by the Praetorians as his successor, the Senate was perforce compelled to acquiesce. Then the dynastic principle as well as the supremacy of the military power seemed firmly established. Moreover Domitian, in complete reliance on the army whose pay he had increased, succeeded for the time in introducing into his office the essential elements of Oriental monarchy—the sacredness of his own person and a type of rule that was absolute, repressive, and that did not hesitate to employ methods of cruelty in suppressing not only senatorial disaffection, but whatever could be regarded by a suspicious mind as savoring of disloyalty or independence of spirit among his subjects. He did strengthen the frontiers, thus, perhaps, averting for a time the catastrophe which was already beginning to threaten; but he converted the principate into a real tyranny, assuming a perpetual censorship, endangering the financial stability of the Empire by constantly enriching the *fiscus,* his own private purse, at the expense of the *aerarium,* or State Treasury. His Oriental tendencies reached their climax when he capped his despotic tyranny by proclaiming himself a god. The Praetorian Guard revolted and put him to death.

The five emperors who followed, commonly called the Antonines, have been generally known since the time of Gibbon as the Five Good Emperors. Under them life was probably more comfortable for a large part of the inhabitants of the Empire than at almost any other time. The improvements in the means of transportation both by land and by sea, the development of trade and commerce, the multiplication of luxuries—all combined with the enlightened attitude of the rulers to present a picture of apparent prosperity and felicity that endured almost to the end of the period. The seeds of future trouble, however, were not only present, but were being steadily multiplied through an extended period of peace by a growing laxity as well as by the gradual barbarization of the army and the hasty admission of barbarians to Roman citizenship.

There seemed to be a real renewal of ancient times when, on the assassination of Domitian, the Senate asserted itself in electing Nerva as his successor. The principle of adoption was restored by him and his three immediate successors. Under Trajan the Senate actually governed for two years while the emperor was absent on the Rhine. Although he was a provincial from Spain, he won the confidence and admiration of the ancient aristocracy. All seemed prosperous and secure. After the conquest of Dacia he settled Roman colonists there with the result that to this day in Roumania the language is still closely akin to Latin. The approval of the Senate was evident in the title of Optimus, which it conferred on Trajan, for this was a title which in the past had been reserved exclusively for Jove.

Hadrian, who is perhaps best remembered for his sumptuous villa near Tivoli, the great wall in Britain, and for his extensive journeys throughout the Empire, felt so convinced of the danger of too great extension that he abandoned his conquests in the East, returned Assyria and Mesopotamia to the Parthians, and restored the independence of Armenia. Most far-reaching, however, of his innovations was the institution of a bureaucracy of civil servants, all of whom were directly responsible to the emperor himself. This bureaucracy was destined later to become the effective instrument of the absolute emperors who definitely assumed both the prerogatives and the outward ceremonial of Oriental despots. Under Hadrian this civil service provided salaries and careers for men of equestrian rank. Hadrian carried the principle of adoption to such a length that, in adopting as his colleague and successor T. Aurelius Antoninus (Antoninus Pius), he required him in turn to adopt Marcus Annius Verus (Marcus Aurelius).

Marcus Aurelius, the conscientious Stoic philosopher, had an intense dislike for the Christians, but to the large body of his subjects he must have seemed closely to approach the ideal of a Roman emperor. Yet the years of his reign were sorely troubled. While under him the Senate, which was composed of wealthy and cultivated aristocrats, in a real sense actually ruled, yet at the same time the army was becoming more and more barbarous. Even the Praetorian Guard was no longer Roman in spirit and predominantly Italian in personnel. The encroachments of barbarians had now reached the point where they were received as *coloni,* or settlers, not only within the confines of the Empire, but even inside Italy itself. The peace-loving emperor was compelled to lay aside his philosophical studies and accompany the legions to the frontier. Both Marcus Aurelius and Hadrian spent much of their time on horseback on the outer rim of the Empire, for the signs of future trouble were not hard to see. War had become distasteful to the Roman people and the contrast is striking between its glorification on the column of Trajan and the emphasis of its horrors to be found on that of Marcus Aurelius, who died while engaged in a campaign on the banks of the Danube. The sense of security and the brief apparent revival of prosperity were interrupted not only by wars and revolts but by epidemics and pestilence as well.

The most ominous as well as the most colorful of Marcus Aurelius' bequests to the Empire was his son. The compromise that had been established between the Senate and the army became weaker and weaker and there was little opposition from a generation that had ceased to remember the civil war and bloodshed that ensued after the death of Nero. It was the paternal affection of the emperor that induced him to discard the principle of adoption that had been well established by his predecessors, and to name as his successor his son Commodus, who was the very antithesis of his father in all things.

Under Commodus, whose interests were focused almost exclusively on gladiators and their games, whose worthless friends were soon elevated to positions which were normally the exclusive property of Roman senators and knights, revolts in the army became serious, while conspiracies instigated by the senators and other aristocrats, who could not but regard him as an usurper, finally brought to an end his twelve years of misrule. Once more the Senate seemed to come into its own. More than two centuries had elapsed since the machine was first set in motion and it seemed as though a return to ancient ways and standards might be possible.

The choice of Pertinax, however, in A.D. 193 involved too drastic measures of reform. His austerity and discipline, as well as his lack of social rank, soon resulted in his being put out of the way in another Praetorian revolt. Then, as after the death of Nero, the lack of a fixed principle with regard to the succession in the principate, led to the intervention of the legions and to civil war. The machine which Augustus set in motion had now completely broken down. Two candidates were set up by the Praetorians, who now put the Empire up at auction, offering to give it to the highest bidder; while the legions in Britain, Pannonia and Egypt each proclaimed a pretender. It was the candidate of the Pannonian legions, L. Septimius Severus, from a well-known family in Leptis in North Africa, the candidate least acceptable to the Senate, who was ultimately chosen by the Senate under military compulsion.

With Septimius Severus the Empire became a new creation, based solely on military power. There was no longer even the semblance of a compromise with the Senate. He disbanded the Praetorians and, by condemning to death twenty-nine senators and confiscating their extensive properties, he made his own private fortune larger than that enjoyed by any other emperor. He was determined, once in possession of the principate, to secure it for his own descendants, by persuading the Senate to proclaim his son Septimius Bassianus (Caracalla) as his Caesar, and therefore his successor, while also attempting to give some color of legitimacy to his position by proclaiming his own adoption by Marcus Aurelius. This made him also the lawful heir to the enormous fortune of Commodus. The principate became for him merely the means by which he enlarged his personal fortune, which grew to such an extent that he set up a new system for its administration. The opposition of the Senate was offset by seeking his support in the loyalty of a limited number of civil servants who were not of senatorial rank, and by increasing the number of legions, and granting to them and to veterans increased pay and many privileges. Rome lost its unique position. The Senate was reduced to complete impotence. A new social order was brought into being for which the chief qualification was that its loyalty to him should be unquestioned and that it should regard him as its supreme head and benefactor. The new and greatly enlarged Praetorian Guard which he created was his own instrument, and with it he stationed a legion in the vicinity of Rome, thus providing against the danger of future mutiny among the foreign legions and incidentally abandoning one more of the fundamental principles of Augustus. The distance that he had travelled from the inaugurator of the principate, who would make use of none of the titles and decorations of Oriental monarchy, is evident not only in the unusual dignities which he conferred on his Syrian wife, Julia Domna, but in his adoption for himself of the title most abhorrent to the Roman people, *Dominus,* Lord, by which he was all but universally addressed.

Through the support of the army Septimius Severus had succeeded in establishing an absolute monarchy, substituting for the authority of the Senate his own personal authority and that of his own appointed officials who depended on him. But the matter of the succession was not yet sufficiently established to weather the weakness of the two sons, Caracalla and Geta, whom he had associated with him. His parting injunction to them before he died had been: "Be of one mind: enrich the soldiers and trouble about nothing else." But these armies were composed of all the races that made up the Empire, largely barbarians to whom Rome meant nothing and who had not yet acquired even the semblance of civilization. Caracalla had his brother Geta murdered; devoted himself entirely to the army, and sought to humiliate the Senate even more than his father had done, while he spent most of his time in the East, where he appears to have had the brilliant dream of becoming another Alexander the Great. Most significant of all that he did, however, was his conferring of Roman citizenship on all free men in the provinces. This measure, which with Caracalla was based entirely on the desire for his own enrichment, was an important step in hastening the process by which the governing classes in the Empire were becoming barbarized.

When Caracalla died his Praetorian Prefect, Macrinus, who was the first of merely equestrian rank as well as the first Mauretanian to attain such distinction, was proclaimed emperor by the legions. He too was an African and, apparently regarding the mere proclamation by the soldiers as insufficient, he sought in various ways to ingratiate himself with the Senate, but he does not appear to have secured their ratification for his election. Defeated by the Parthians, he was forced, for the first time in the history of Rome, to purchase peace at the price of paying an indemnity. In the meantime the legacy of Julia Domna to the Roman Empire was destined to exert a sinister influence, which would eventually bring the military principate of the Severi to an end.

On the death of Caracalla Julia Domna had starved herself to death, while her sister Julia Moesa and her nieces Soemia and Mammaea had been banished by Macrinus. They had taken up their abode in the temple of the Sun-god, El-gabal, at Emesa in Syria, the priesthood of which had been ancestral in their family. Julia Moesa found her opportunity in the disaffection of the legions stationed near Emesa, whom she persuaded by generous gifts that Bassianus, the fourteen-year-old son of her daughter Soemia, was Caracalla's son. At her instigation they proceeded to proclaim the young priest of El-gabal as emperor. Macrinus was slain and the Roman Empire descended to its lowest depths of shame during the reign of the debauched young priest of the Sun-god, whose licentious ceremonies and processions shocked the sensibilities even of pagan Rome, and resulted in his murder. Then the survivors of the family which Septimius Severus had unhappily brought to the Palatine seemed to feel that the Senate alone could provide an authority that was beyond dispute, and proceeded to seek the assistance of the very body that Septimius Severus and his son had so completely crushed. Severus Alexander, the son of Julia Domna's other niece, Mammaea, was not yet fourteen years old when he began, under the direction of his mother, to attempt the restoration of the Empire by adopting the policy of the good emperors of the past. The Oriental etiquette of the court disappeared; the Senate, with its worst elements removed, seemed to regain something of the authority of which Severus had deprived it. There now ensued an alliance of the emperor and the Senate against the army. Military reverses led to the adoption by Severus Alexander of the policy of removing legions from the East to the West to meet the inroads of the Germans, as well as to a desire on his part to resort to negotiations as a substitute for armed conflict. To the legions this appeared tantamount to treason. In the mutiny which ensued both Severus Alexander and his mother were murdered.

The leader of the mutiny, Maximin, a Thracian of obscure origin who was unable even to speak Latin acceptably, was proclaimed emperor by the troops at Mayence. How he obtained the recognition of the Senate is a mystery, but from the fact that he was coöpted into the priestly colleges, it is obvious that it must have been secured. The Senate later, however, denied having taken such action. Maximin ignored the Senate in every possible way and removed the senatorial officers from their commands. His proclamation ushered in a period of more than thirty years more terrible in both civil and foreign wars than any period the Empire had hitherto known. The wealthy Proconsul of Africa, Gordianus, was proclaimed by the legions in that province and was recognized by the Senate. He associated with him his son of the same name, but both were too rich and pampered by luxury to meet a situation that demanded courage and strength, and were soon eliminated by the governor of Numidia and the local garrison.

The Senate proceeded to set up two puppet emperors, Balbinus and Pupienus. The Roman populace refused to permit the Senate alone to express itself in this revival of authority. It too must be articulate. A third Gordianus, a grandson of Gordian I, was added to the two emperors already set up by the Senate. Maximin and his son were murdered by his own soldiers, who must have realized the weakness of a claim that had no legal authority, and who probably overrated the strength of the revived prestige of the Senate.

The opportunity of the Senate seemed to have arrived, for now it had the support of the unanimous loyalty of Italy. At this time it might have been possible even to restore permanently the republic, had the Senate known how to use its opportunity wisely, but the desire to weaken the power of the army was too obvious. Conflict with the Praetorians ensued. Balbinus and Pupienus became the victims of a military revolt. The Praetorians proclaimed the young Gordian emperor, and the senatorial revival came to an ignominious end. In the same year (A.D. 238) the Carpi and the Goths crossed the Danube, and three years later the Persians under Sapor invaded Mesopotamia and threatened Syria. Gordian was but thirteen years old. His father-in-law, Timesitheus, however, who became Praetorian Prefect, was a capable general who repulsed a series of enemies in the East and was in a real sense protector of the Empire. But Timesitheus died in 243 and Gordian appointed in his place a good soldier, Philip, an Arab, who was far too ambitious to remain Praetorian Prefect and soon put Gordian out of the way. Philip was proclaimed by the soldiers and sought the confirmation of the Senate. Together with his son, who was not more than seven years old, this son of an Arab sheikh, was recognized by the Senate, but he did not last long, for, confronted by fresh attempts of the Goths to cross the Danube, as well as by pretenders in the provinces, he was abandoned by the legions, who proceeded to proclaim Decius, a Pannonian, governor of Dacia. Decius defeated and slew Philip at Verona in 249.

Decius, whom we shall have occasion to mention at greater length when we come to consider his relation to the Church, had the distinction of being the first Roman emperor to bolt in the face of barbarians as well as the first to die in conflict against them. The state of the Empire was desperate. The struggle between the Senate and the army had reached a new pitch of intensity. The inroads of the Goths threatened to cut the Empire into two halves by driving a wedge between the East and the West. Gallus, whom the legions proclaimed immediately after the death of Decius, belied his reputation as a great military leader, left the Goths all their booty, and paid them tribute as the price of peace. Even so, the Goths failed to observe the peace, but proceeded to invade Moesia once more. They were repelled by Aemilianus, a Moor, whom the legions proclaimed emperor in return for his promise that they should receive the money which had been formerly paid to the Goths. Aemilianus slew Gallus, only to be slain in turn by Valerian, the governor of Germany and a former censor under Decius, whom Gallus had despatched against him.

Under Valerian, although he was a senator of noble family and not without ability, the Empire sank to the depths of humiliation and disgrace. Plague and internal discord encouraged fresh barbarian inroads. Goths, Alemanni, Franks, Saxons began renewed attacks along the frontiers, while in the East Persia regained Armenia and invaded Syria. It was no wonder that St. Cyprian, in the once rich and prosperous province of North Africa, should see the imminent end of the world.

"The world itself," he writes to Demetrianus, "now bears witness to its approaching end by the evidence of its failing powers. There is not so much rain for fertilizing the seeds, nor in summer is there so much warmth for ripening them. . . .

Less marble is quarried from the exhausted mountains, and the dwindling supplies of gold and silver show that the mines are worked out and the impoverished veins of metal diminish from day to day. The peasant is failing and disappearing from the fields, the sailor at sea, the soldier in the camp, uprightness in the forum, justice in the court, concord in friendships, skill in the arts, discipline in morals. Can anything that is old preserve the same powers that it had in the prime and vigor of its youth?"

In 259 or 260 Valerian not only failed in his expedition against the Persians, but was taken prisoner. It is reported that robed in purple and in chains he served as Sapor's footstool, and that, after his death, his skin was tanned and stuffed to decorate a Persian temple. A pestilence raged for fifteen years and earthquakes brought great disaster to Asia. Eutropius sums up the situation by saying that despair reigned supreme and the Roman Empire was all but destroyed. So swift was the succession of rival pretenders to the Empire that the period came to be known as that of the Thirty Tyrants. Valerian had already recognized the breaking up of the old Empire, the unity of which had been the great work of Rome in the past, when he nominated his son Gallienus as Augustus and assigned to him the West, while taking the East as his own share. The eighteen candidates for the purple who appeared in different parts of the Empire during the reign of Gallienus are really the evidence of something almost equivalent to the national particularism which developed at a later period in Europe. None of them except Zenobia at Palmyra were guilty of separatism. They all or nearly all of them fought against the barbarians. Had this process continued unchecked it must inevitably have resulted ere long in the rise of nationalities.

Gallienus is known to us only from a late and prejudiced source. He probably did not fully deserve the evil reputation he has had through the centuries. He had done his best to stem the tide of Germanic invasion when, on the loss of his father, he was confronted by the pretensions of Postumus, who was proclaimed by the legions in Gaul, and of Ingenuus for whom the legions in Pannonia and Moesia declared. The former did actually govern for some years over Gaul, Britain and Spain, while the latter was soon defeated and put to death. Not only were there a tremendous number of pretenders during this unhappy reign, but the remotest corners of the Empire experienced fire and sword and devastating conflict. On all sides peaceful homes were invaded by barbarians. Famine, starvation, pestilence, vast waste of material resources brought on the collapse of confidence, of money, and of credit. The triumph of barbarism seemed complete.

Before Gallienus fell as the victim of a conspiracy among his generals, the recurrent antagonism between the Senate and the army had reached another climax, which had resulted in the exclusion by Gallienus of the senatorial class from the army, which he now constituted an exclusive guild. Aurelius Victor, writing at a much later time, says that the Senate could have revoked the edict of Gallienus and might have recovered their place in the military camps. No opposition would have come from the army, had the Senate been sufficiently firm. This exclusion of the senators from military service by Gallienus had a profound influence, which resulted in the creation of so important a position as that of *magister militum* under Constantine. It was obvious that a new organization with a complete revamping of the old machine was demanded by the exigencies of the times. The restoration of internal order and peace, the adequate defence of the frontiers, as well as financial recovery were the crying needs. There were two of the three generals who had conspired against Gallienus, Claudius and Aurelian, who were both men of high character and ability. Claudius, who sensed the Gothic peril probably more than did any other, was recognized by the other generals, by the legions, and by the Senate. His brief reign (268–270) was distinguished by the defeat of the great coalition of northern tribes, and by the expulsion of the Goths from the Illyrian peninsula which won him the surname of Gothicus, but he fell a victim of the plague—the first emperor to die other than a violent death since Septimius Severus. Aurelian, an Illyrian peasant, had, in less than five years, an extraordinary record of achievements to his credit. The Alemanni were suppressed; order was restored on the frontiers; Zenobia, the Queen of Palmyra, who had taken possession of Egypt, was defeated and brought to Rome a captive; Gaul was compelled to surrender. To all outward appearances the Empire was well along on the road to restoration. It is impossible to conjecture how much further the process might have been advanced, for near Byzantium in 275 Aurelian was assassinated by a dishonest secretary whose fears he had aroused.

After the death of Aurelian six months of interregnum ensued. Then came a situation as extraordinary as it was unexpected. The legions declined to elect an emperor and appealed to the Senate, which thus experienced its final, though short-lived, restoration to power. But no senator could be found who appeared to have a consuming passion to serve the Empire as its ruler. Finally the Senate proceeded to elect its own most distinguised member, Tacitus, a venerable gentleman of seventy-five, whose reign ended after six months of campaigning in the East. His brother Florian was proclaimed by some of the legions, but Probus, one of Aurelian's best generals, who was the choice of the other legions, was the successful candidate. Probus had no particular desire to be emperor and, although a general and chosen by the army, his policy was to respect the authority of the Senate and to restore to that body some of its old prerogatives. He was constantly active on the frontiers, where he met with great success. To restore order in the provinces and revive discipline among the soldiers was his great aim. His military achievements; the ending of the Gallic peril, the pacification of Rhaetia, the repulse of an invasion of Vandals from Illyricum—won him a magnificent triumph which he celebrated in 281–2. He even had the temerity to speak of a time when an army would no longer be needed. It is not difficult to imagine the reaction of the troops to such a sentiment. But the anarchy which he feared, the dread of which had induced him to reinstate the Senate in some of its ancient privileges, was inevitable. The situation demanded more drastic treatment than he was able to administer. The irritated troops revolted and at Sirmium one of his own soldiers killed him in the "iron tower" in which he had taken refuge. The Senate relapsed into insignificance, and once more the real power was in the military camps. But Probus continued to rule, after his death, in the persons of Carus and Diocletian, of Constantius Chlorus and Maximian and Galerius, all of whom had served their apprenticeship under him and had learned their lessons well.

The legions then chose Aurelius Carus as his successor and thus for the moment brought to an end the anarchy which had followed after the murder of Probus. Carus, the Prefect of the Guard, was a crude but able soldier who did appear to have some new ideas to offer. He proceeded at once to associate his two sons, Carinus and Numerianus, with him as Caesars and gave to the former the government of the provinces of the West, while he took the latter with him on his expedition against Persia. He seems to have planned to inaugurate a system similar to that which was introduced a little later by Diocletian, with himself as supreme and one Caesar for the East and another for the West. Perhaps he hoped to settle the matter of succession, which had been a fundamental cause of the anarchy that prevailed in the empire. His Persian campaign was successful but, ere he returned to the West, he died mysteriously after reigning only a year. We shall consider the cause of his death when we come to speak of Diocletian. Carinus and Numerianus succeeded their father, but on the way home Numerianus also died. He was not a soldier, but fancied himself a poet, and army life had no charms for him. His father-in-law, Aper, who was now the Praetorian Prefect, openly admitted that he had murdered him. Aper was tried before a tribunal of generals, but was cut down before he could make his defence, and the assembly proceeded at once to appoint as emperor the commander of the bodyguard, Diocletian, who dated his reign from this day, September 17, A.D. 284.

In this brief survey of the fortunes of the Roman principate during a little more than three centuries we have been concerned chiefly with the major problems that were involved: the relation between the principate and the Senate, and the principle by which succession was to be determined. The former problem was really the contest for power between the Senate and the army. The particular service which each could render to the State varied greatly from one period to another. There were times when the army had little to offer. At other times the protection of the frontiers or the maintenance of order was the primary need, and at such times the army could manifest its supreme importance. A balance between the two could never be maintained for long.

The Senate was the symbol of the tradition of the past which had established the greatness of Rome. It was the instrument of the industries and commerce, as well as of the culture that had characterized that earlier period. In other words it typified civilization, with all that that word implies. Unfortunately mere civilization has never been able to endure for long without military protection. Moreover the forces of civilization tend to disqualify men for the active pursuit of warfare. Civilization must always depend upon an army, but, by the same token, it must ever be subject to the danger of being dominated by the army which is expected to protect it, but which may, if in the saddle, jeopardize its most priceless possessions. The beginning of the imperial age in Rome was a time of ripe flowering in urban civilization as well as in agrarian prosperity and in artistic culture. This Golden Age, however, soon lapsed into mediocrity and, save for another brief period of apparent prosperity in the time of the Antonines, a steady decline proceeded almost without interruption. The army, on the other hand, represented the bourgeois class—the small farmer and the small tradesman; it was the type and symbol of Roman democracy. The struggle between the Senate and the army was, therefore, in reality a class struggle. At the outset the army was in the ascendent, for it was only through the backing of a victorious army that Augustus could win his way against senatorial prejudice and aristocratic conservatism. But his was an army that was Roman in spirit and preponderantly Italian in personnel. The army became more and more barbarian as the pressure on the frontiers increased and the Senate was not sufficiently capable or alert to maintain for any length of time its occasional restoration of authority. After the time of Septimius Severus the power of the army was unquestioned and in the brief resurgences of senatorial activity, it was never the initiative of the Senate that had asserted itself. In the meantime the pressure from the East became constantly more insistent, and migration from the East made itself felt increasingly. Had it ever been possible to achieve an equilibrium between the two rival powers the stability of Augustus' machine might have been attained. So long as that balance could not be realized, instability was the inevitable result.

The uncertainty regarding the principle that was to govern succession in the principate was another basic reason for the breakdown of the system. Even where the principle governing succession is firmly established, pretenders may arise and revolutions may occur, but where there is no fixed principle to which appeal can be made to determine the legitimacy of a claimant to the office of emperor, the death of each prince is the opportunity for a potential revolution. We have seen that it was merely because he was prevented by uncontrollable circumstances that Augustus did not establish the principle of hereditary succession during his own lifetime. Yet it is doubtful if the establishment of this principle would have preserved the life of the Empire and the smooth functioning of the machine which Augustus set in motion for any longer time than it did survive. Tactitus at the end of the first century A.D. could see clearly how unsatisfactory a succession based solely on heredity might be. He puts in the mouth of Galba these words: "To be begotten and born of princes is mere chance, and is not reckoned higher, but the judgment displayed in adoption is unhampered; and, if one wishes to make a choice, common consent points out the individual." Still it requires rare unselfishness and patriotism for a prince to disinherit his son. Chance gave no sons to the emperors of the Julio-Claudian house, but the adoption, which was governed by a semblance of family relationship, was characterized by Tacitus (also in the words he assigns to Galba) as the heritage of one family.

Vespasian really attempted to reinstate the principate as devised by Augustus, with clearly defined duties, yet that very restoration of the principles of Augustus involved the establishment of an hereditary principate. Four of the Antonines had no sons, but, when confronted with the question of either adopting a capable successor from outside his family or reviving the hereditary principle in favor of his unworthy son, Marcus

Aurelius chose the latter alternative. With the accession of Septimius Severus the dynastic principle was fully instated and would doubtless have persisted, had not the very ascendency of the military element, which Septimius Severus had established, led to frequently recurring civil strife and instability. The inability of the Empire to devise a constitutional principle, generally acceptable, to determine the succession in the principate, was another basic reason why the machine must inevitably break down.

In addition to these two fundamental causes of instability in the functioning of the Empire there was still another situation that called for drastic treatment. That was the constantly recurring and ever more serious economic collapse.

Augustus made no important changes in the financial system and introduced only small and relatively negligible taxes so far as concerned the citizens of Italy, who had never paid taxes on their Italian land. The State, which drew its income almost entirely from its domains, which included the provinces, now was confronted with the increased expense incident to a large standing army. For some time past wars had been made to pay for themselves by means of the booty taken by the soldiers. Now there was an extensive development of costly building, of elaborate roads in the provinces, of public games and shows, as well as the free distribution of corn to be provided for, in addition to the greatly increased military expense. Augustus, in instituting a census and providing for the more orderly and systematic collection of taxes in the provinces, achieved what the Senate was unable to do.

Augustus himself acquired, partly through legacies and through his personal possession of Egypt after the death of Cleopatra, enormous wealth, which he was able, not only to devote to lavish public benefactions, but which also enabled him several times to come to the rescue of an impoverished

Senate. By such methods he escaped senatorial interference in his own provinces and eventually built up an administration for his own personal and provincial treasury which developed into the *fiscus*. Had it not been for his accumulation of great wealth and his diverting it to the use of the public treasury, bankruptcy would have been inevitable for the State. It was through a deft manipulation of the freedom from interference which he thus acquired, that he was able to effect his supremacy, which was thus based, not merely on a victorious army but also on his personal control of finances.

The maintenance of great public spectacles and doles, combined with extravagance in building, was a serious financial drain. Still, during the time of the Julio-Claudian emperors, a period of rigid economy invariably followed the reign of each extravagant and wasteful emperor. But the prodigality of Nero led to so serious a want of money that a contribution from Italy was demanded after the fire of Rome, and at that time the depreciation of the coinage was first begun. Vespasian felt compelled to increase greatly all taxes and to make larger and larger demands for tribute from the provinces. Trajan, despite the fact that he was able to undertake vast public works without increasing taxes, continued to debase the coinage; while Antoninus Pius, although he reduced the taxes and remitted arrears from the past, continued and even increased this vicious practice. Marcus Aurelius found the financial problem so acute that he committed that responsibility to the Senate. Under the earlier Antonines there had been every evidence of commercial and industrial prosperity, but it had been largely fictitious. Under Commodus the situation became almost hopeless.

Under both Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla, the debasing of the coinage increased. Financial chaos was continuous from the time of the Severi onward. Wars and invasions were costly. This was a period marked by migratory movements among peoples outside the Empire. Many of these peoples were anxious to come within the circle of a more highly developed civilization, and the frontiers of the Empire were barriers which attempted to restrain a force that was becoming more and more irresistible. Epidemics and a decreasing population facilitated the process by which many of these barbarians were brought into the lands of the Empire. Commerce and industry broke down, and attempts to stimulate them failed. The increase of large estates meant that less and less land was under cultivation. The breakdown of communications paralyzed trade. This was due in a large measure to the insecurity and danger of long voyages. Prices steadily rose, while production decreased. The coinage finally became so debased that the State itself refused to accept the very money that it was putting into circulation. The period of military breakdown and of barbarian inroads coincided with that of economic collapse. The private *fiscus* of the emperor and the increased expense of the army absorbed all the resources available; yet doles and gifts to the populace continued. Hence there arose a new privileged class. All wealth was concentrated in the hands of the emperor and his bureaucracy of military and civil officials, drawn from the lower orders of society and from an almost totally barbarian army. Such was the situation that confronted Diocletian at his accession. Both he and Constantine would have to devise measures to meet this state of economic chaos. Various expedients had already been tried, and had invariably failed.

When we consider these three great problems which threatened the stability of the Empire, the question naturally arises: What was it that preserved the unity of the Empire through so long a period of uncertainty and chaos? It was, above all else, the common culture, to some degree uniform throughout the vast extent of the Roman Empire, which had been inherited from the ancient Greek concept of the city-state and had been widely established in the East during the Hellenistic age, that provided the real basis of unity that was able to survive such catastrophic changes over so broad an expanse of territory. The town everywhere in the Empire represented a corporate life that provided mutual advantages for those who lived in it, as well as a unifying center for the inhabitants of the country districts that surrounded it.

More than half a century before Augustus established the principate Italian towns that were inhabited by Roman citizens had begun to enjoy different degrees of local self-government. *Immunitas,* or freedom from taxes, and *Libertas,* the right to govern themselves by their ancient constitution, were granted to various towns according to their relations to Rome in the past. Under the Empire the various provincial communities might enjoy progressively different degrees of autonomy. In time the local chieftains in barbarous provinces might become an aristocracy, as their town became a *municipium* or a *colonia.* This local aristocracy would provide the *duumviri,* the two local consuls, who exercised jurisdiction and were responsible for the administration of the town, with supreme control of its finances and of the local police; and the *decuriones,* or local senators. There were also *aediles,* who had supervision over the markets, roads, buildings, the games and the doles; *quaestors,* who were responsible for the treasury; and the *pontiffs, augurs, flamens* and *augustales,* charged with responsibility for the maintenance of the religious rites and ceremonies. There was also a local assembly, and the *honorati,* who had passed through the office of decurion, constituted a local aristocracy.

Everywhere the cities of the provinces had the security that was provided by guarded frontiers. While in the East the Hellenistic powers had already built cities which the Romans found ready as centers with a certain tradition of culture, in

Gaul and Germany, Britain and Spain, the fortified army posts provided the nucleus for the new cities that were to be developed. In new provinces, such as Africa, great estates developed from the lands purchased by Roman nobles, and these estates in time became fresh sources of wealth for the *fiscus,* through confiscation, and, in the time of the military emperors, their owners became revolutionary leaders. Urban centers sprang up in addition to the great estates, and in these the native and Roman elements mingled in a community life. Thus, in the course of time, the entire Empire became a network of cities and towns, enjoying obvious advantages, and sharing a local life of their own as well as common interests and commercial relations.

In the age of the Antonines, despite the fact that the seeds of decay were already present, the opportunities for making money, the relative security provided by the protection of the frontiers, as well as the civilization and culture which the city embodied, were sufficient to maintain the integrity of the urban life and to make it still the real basis of unity through the Empire. In the period of disorder, anarchy and chaos that followed, disintegration inevitably set in but, despite the fact that rival pretenders represented different sectional and racial groups, and that the barbarian element had come to dominate the army, the outward unity was not yet destroyed. It was, however, an empire that was steadily and inevitably breaking up of which Diocletian became possessed after the murder of Numerianus and Aper.

In our brief survey of the history of the Empire from Augustus to Diocletian it should be obvious what were the pressing problems which an emperor who attempted to restore security and stability must face and must try to solve. The constant struggle between classes must be settled; a definite authoritative principle regarding the succession in the principate must be established; the financial collapse must be repaired; and the unity of the vast empire must be restored. The way in which Diocletian and Constantine attempted to solve these problems gives to their reigns outstanding significance.

Chapter II

THE CHURCH BEFORE DIOCLETIAN

When augustus came into power the ancient religion of the Roman Empire was in a state of paralysis. The educated classes had lost faith in the efficacy of the old cults; the populace scoffed at the gods who had been worshipped in the past. Philosophy had become the substitute for religion for the former; superstition for the latter. Augustus saw the opportunity to utilize a religious revival for the furtherance of his own aims. He records with pride on the famous monument of Ancyra the temples that he has rebuilt. A religious sanction for his novel claims, a restoration of primitive austerity in the moral life of the people, a deepening of the sense of reverence, a turning back of men's minds towards the sacred rites of the past—all might work to his advantage, and to this end he made use of the literary gifts of Vergil, of Horace and of Livy.

New cults from various sources, but chiefly from the East, were being welcomed at Rome. The tiny basilica near the Porta Maggiore, adorned with delicate bas-reliefs depicting subjects from Greek mythology, which came to light by accident in 1917, while not dating probably from the reign of Augustus, is typical of the importations that were now beginning to be welcomed by a people who had lost faith in the old and were groping about for a religious or philosophical novelty that would be more satisfying than the outworn rites of the past. This tiny building evidently belonged to a sect of Neo-Pythagoreans. Many of the tombs of the time of Augustus make it clear that the Eleusinian mysteries also had their devotees, and this influence is apparent in many of the fancies depicted by Vergil in his portrayal of the world of shades. Astrology had its followers and there were Epicureans of the same sort as Trimalchio, who lived in the time of Nero. But the typical expression of the religious sentiment of the Empire was the worship of the genius of Rome and of Augustus.

One is at first tempted to ask how it was possible among a people who were practical, intelligent, and to a certain degree inclined to be sceptical, for emperor-worship to arise and to claim the dominant place as the official religion of the State. The answer should not be too difficult for us who have seen the worship of the State dominate modern nations. Augustus had to find some real sanction for the power that he had assumed. The material from which this sanction might be derived was ready at hand. In the East it was no new thing for men who had achieved great things to be deified. The genius of Rome had already been revered in the West as the goddess Roma. Messianic ideas from the East had travelled to the West and, together with the Sibylline books, had provided both the background and the inspiration for the dream of a renewed Age of Saturn, a Golden Age of peace and felicity, such as found expression in various poets of the early days of the Empire, and particularly in the Fourth Eclogue of Vergil.

When we call to mind the amazing achievement of Augustus, relying solely on military power and on his own personal riches, the satisfaction which was felt by his subjects in various parts of the Empire should not surprise us if it expressed itself in new and unexpected terms. It was quite natural that divine honors should be accorded the emperor who could show such stupendous accomplishment. Temples of the genius of Rome and of Augustus became characteristic of the provincial cities in the East, and this custom soon made rapid progress westward.

The statue of the emperor himself, as representing the genius of the Julian family, found its place beside that of the goddess Roma. In Rome itself, where the worship of the goddess Roma and the idea of the genius of each family had long been accepted, the adoption of the custom that arose first in the East was not difficult of accomplishment. It was really the worship of the Roman state, as identified with its ruler, and, while its outward forms were different, it was fundamentally the same as the elevation of nationalism into a religious cult that has been characteristic of modern European states.

Another religious tendency, which had already appeared and was now rapidly developing, is of importance for any real estimate of the religious background of the early Empire. This was the spirit of syncretism, a readiness to accept and to welcome divinities and cults from various sources and of diverse sorts, so long as they were not obviously hostile to the best interests of the State or subversive of the commonly accepted moral standards. Those that were noisy or licentious might meet with official opposition. In the remote past the Bacchanalian rites had been forbidden. So now there were vigorous efforts to suppress the exciting rites of Cybele. But, in general, if loyalty to the State were unquestioned, and the official worship of Rome and the emperor were not opposed, all sorts of cults might gain adherents and find a safe abode, not only in the provinces, but in Rome itself.

The Catholic Church made its way from East to West through the various provinces of the Roman Empire. It seems never to have received official cognizance from an emperor until the time of Trajan. The Empire furnished many of the conditions that facilitated its rapid and easy spread. The universal peace, the uniformity of language, the ready means of transportation afforded both by the highly developed system of roads and by the boats that plied the Mediterranean in safety

—all contributed to its expansion. At the same time the breakdown of the legends of the past as men's minds turned to philosophy, as well as the revival of the religious instinct through the importation of Oriental cults, had their part in predisposing the minds of many men towards the acceptance of the Christian message. It was not long until the Church ceased to be exclusively Jewish in its membership and, in fact, began to include within its fold men and women of various social ranks.

From the earliest days of the Church persecution was a constantly recurring experience. The first that can be called in any sense a systematic persecution was apparently that under Nero, who accused the Christians of responsibility for the devastating fire that destroyed the chief part of Rome in the summer of A.D. 64. Tacitus describes the persecution with all its repulsive details. He tells us of the victims clad in the hides of wild beasts and torn to pieces by dogs, as well as of those who were covered with pitch and used as torches to provide light for the entertainment given by Nero at night in his gardens. The execution of St. Peter seems definitely to have taken place at this time. It is impossible to be so certain regarding the actual date of the martyrdom of St. Paul. Tacitus seems to indicate quite clearly that by now the Christians at Rome had become numerous, for he mentions "an immense multitude." He speaks also of the reputation that the Christians bore as "haters of the human race," and indicates that Nero must have been regarded by the populace in general with utter detestation, since the rank and file of Roman society refused, despite the unpopularity of the Christians, to attribute responsibility for the fire to them, and even dared express sympathy for them.

The reasons for the unpopularity of the Christians as well as for the evil reputation that they bore among the people of Rome are quite obvious. To the Christian the official worship of the emperor could be nothing short of utter blasphemy,—

the exaltation of the creature above the Creator. In fact as St. John saw this official worship organized in the province of Asia it was the worship of the Beast, and the goddess Roma was the great harlot. Christians had no part in the political life of the nation, nor could they participate in the brutal games that played so important a rôle in the contemporary life of Rome and of the provincial cities. Christians were isolated, as were the Jews, from the main stream of society. Together with the Jews, they were regarded as clannish, superstitious, contumacious, and there were constant opportunities for circulating scandalous tales regarding their secret meetings and unknown rites.

Before the time of Trajan it is quite clear that it was tacitly assumed that Christianity was illegal, but it remained for him definitely to declare it so. The Church had made its most notable progress in the East, where, among a variety of religions, it aimed at supplanting all others. It was from the remote province of Bithynia, where he was governor, that Pliny wrote to the emperor to tell him of how the temples of other cults had been deserted because of the spread of "this superstition." He also indicated to the emperor that many calumnies had been circulated about the adherents of Christianity which might be used as pretexts for persecuting them. Trajan, who was the first non-Roman emperor, evidently intended his rescript as an act of mercy. He makes it quite clear that the mere name of Christian was in itself regarded as a crime, but that irregular proceedings and the hunting down of Christians were to cease. When men were clearly proved to be Christians, they were to be offered pardon if they would abjure their religion and conform to the official religion of the State. This law seems severe, yet Trajan and his successor Hadrian apparently inclined to moderation in its execution. The real effect of the rescript of Trajan was to rouse the consciousness that Christianity was legally a crime. From this time onward the danger of persecution was always imminent. Fanatical mobs might influence local governors and magistrates and, even in Hadrian's reign, Pope Telesephorus was martyred and St. Ignatius came from Antioch to Rome to be thrown to wild beasts in the colosseum.

From the time of Trajan until that of Decius persecutions of Christians were usually of local origin and it was not the emperor who took the initiative, although he might be more than ready to lend his encouragement. This was, in fact, the policy of the Antonines. To their subjects in general they seemed model rulers, because of their practical wisdom and their sincere concern for the welfare of their subjects. Yet these "good emperors" were always ready to lend their authority to the desire of the populace when it sought to persecute the members of a group who were not only calumniated on all sides, but who were also obviously outside the general scheme, and not embraced in the scope of their plans for the common weal. Thus we find St. Polycarp in Smyrna, St. Justin and the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne falling victims to the policy which was conscientiously adopted by Marcus Aurelius.

On the other hand unworthy emperors, like Commodus, were in general more lenient towards the Christians, perhaps because they were too deeply concerned with their own pleasures and gave too little thought to affairs of state to care to be bothered with such matters. In the case of Commodus, the abandonment of the persecuting principles of his father seems to have been due to the efforts of his favorite mistress, Marcia. It is difficult to explain the association of this woman with the Christian community. It would seem to be abundantly clear from her manner of life that she did not pretend to practise the religion which she favored. Yet it is evident from the fact that she did exert this influence in favor of the Christians with the emperor, that the Church now embraced in its membership varied types who were representative of sections of society that had no place there a century earlier.

With the rise of the military type of emperor under Septimius Severus the Empire experienced new developments in the realm of religion. Julia Domna, the empress, was a woman of outstanding intelligence and of indomitable will. She assembled about her on the Palatine a group of intellectual and cultivated men who had ceased to regard the ancient gods with ridicule and were trying to effect some sort of gradation of divinities that would express something like a divine unity. A unifying principle of this sort, which combined the various religions of the past, could provide a definite and united opposition to the progress of Christianity. The gods of various peoples might be regarded as representatives of the one supreme God, who ruled through them and of whom they were all partial manifestations. The worship of the Syrian Sun-god, which was ancestral in the family of Julia Domna, offered a natural and appealing symbol of the Supreme God. Moreover she had the intellectual equipment to propagate an effective synthetic religion, which might well become the unifying force in the Empire. While the emperor issued an edict regarding the Christians which was really a confirmation of the edicts of Trajan and of Marcus Aurelius, and gave free scope to the anger against the Christians in the East, which was only too ready to express itself in trials, tortures and martyrdoms, the empress grasped her opportunity of intellectual leadership to attempt to turn to her advantage the general disposition towards syncretism in religion, by installing the oriental cult which belonged essentially to her own family, as the unifying force among all other religions.

To assist in this program she assigned to Philostratus, a member of her literary circle, the task of writing the life of Apollonius of Tyana, a rather obscure figure of the preceding century, a Pythagorean ascetic who was still remembered with reverence in the East as a travelling teacher and wonder-worker. Philostratus, in compiling this life of the little-known ascetic, who was greatly admired by the Hellenistic philosophers of Alexandria, made use of a variety of materials, even including the Gospels of the Christians. He described a devout but rather mysterious figure, devoted in particular to the divine Sun—a figure not devoid of a certain attractiveness and charm. While recent scholars have disputed the idea that this work was written with the purpose of opposing Christianity, there can be little doubt but that, had it won acceptance as genuine, it might have provided a most effective instrument for the accomplishment of the program of the empress to supplant Christianity as well as all the other cults in the empire by the worship of the Sun-god.

When, on the death of Caracalla, Julia Domna's grandnephew became emperor, the Oriental religion seemed to triumph completely over all other religions. The official Roman rites were really supplanted when the emperor was the priest of a Syrian cult and his official title of Pontifex Maximus was subordinated to that of the priest of the unconquered Sun, El-gabal, whose name the young emperor assumed. The tales of licentiousness and debauchery that have come down to us regarding the boy priest-emperor are too preposterous to be credited. But there is no question that the arrogant, unnatural and fanatical youth not only neglected utterly the duties of his office, but also by his absurd and gross rites brought the cult he had imposed on his subjects into complete disrepute. By solemnizing the marriage of the Sun-god to the Carthaginian Astarte and introducing both into the official cult, this foreign youth, who was under the guidance of women, gave still greater offence to his subjects. Eastern religion might seem to triumph for the moment, but his very excesses brought about its doom. When he was compelled to associate his cousin, barely twelve years old, with him in the government, his frequent attempts to have his colleague put out of the way served but to hasten the day when his enraged soldiers would murder him.

Severus Alexander was of a gentle nature and so generously latitudinarian in his religious principles that he had in his private oratory statues of Apollonius of Tyana, Abraham, and Orpheus, as well as a statue of Christ, to whom it was reported that he intended to erect a temple. With Maximin the persecution of the Christians began once more. It was a reaction against the principles of Severus Alexander, and was purely political, and not religious, in its motives, and was directed exclusively against the clergy. For some time the Christians had been unmolested, for they appeared to be harmless, but an earthquake was sufficient evidence of the displeasure of the gods to provoke the demand for persecution, in which the Emperor was quite willing to concur as a measure for the safety of the State. This persecution was of very limited duration and during the period of the short-lived military emperors, who had little time or wealth to devote to the cause of religion, the Church made marked progress. It was during this period that its power to attract men from the more learned and cultured groups of society became evident.

This period of political confusion was also one that saw renewed vigor in the various Oriental cults, which were able to make an appeal to the people of the West on the religious side which the mere myths and ceremonies to which the official Roman religion had been reduced were unable to make. The pagan religion that was typical of Rome lacked the elaborate ceremonial, the hymns and festivals, as well as the ecstatic element which were characteristic of the eastern cults. These cults had also a special appeal for the governing classes, for in many of them there was a sort of mystical justification for the imperial authority. These religions had arisen in lands where a despotic monarch held sway and, as the authority of the Senate waned, they seemed to satisfy the desire to provide a divine sanction to replace the unstable authority which the mere choice of the legions or the will of a moribund Senate might be able to provide.

Among the Oriental cults that now began to gain conspicuous strength, in that of Cybele, with its rites of the *taurobolium* and the *criobolium,* the public slaying of a bull or of a ram, with its promise of a rebirth, there was the thought of a special benefit for the individual. There were priests and priestesses and confraternities, while the rites of Isis and Sarapis had still more elaborate organization. Ornate temples in which daily services were conducted by a professional priesthood stimulated their devotees to special acts of penitence and reparation. Sarapis was commonly identified with the Sun. The cult that was gaining conspicuous strength at this time, however, was that of Mithras, the Persian worship of the Sun-god with whose rites there were mingled elements of Semitic and other local religions of Asia Minor. It seemed to matter little that this cult had its rise in the country that was continuously hostile to Rome. From the time of Commodus, who was initiated into its mysteries, it had been gaining ground steadily in all parts of the Empire save in Egypt, Syria and Greece, and its adherents were becoming very numerous in the imperial armies. Its temples were in caves and had always a representation of the slaying of the bull, which was the source of the crops of the earth. The god's birth from the rock, his shooting at the rock and thus producing rain, his capture of the bull and his receiving of homage from the Sun-god, with whom he shares a sacred meal—all these scenes were depicted on the walls of the dark subterranean shrine. There were seven grades of initiation, in the course of which the initiate, at one point, pretended to die and, at another, was offered a wreath on a sword, which he refused, with the words, "Mithras is my wreath." Thenceforth he refused to wear a wreath. It was a religion exclusively for men, and it had no professional priesthood. The initiatory rites seem to have been central, and these were always conducted in private. It apparently had no public ceremonies. Its great appeal was moral. Mithras might be identified in the minds of some of his initiates as the Supreme God, but he was not such in the Persian conception. He was the god who created the world, its present protector, and would continue to be the protector after death of his worthy follower. The religion of Mithras was hospitably capable of assimilating other cults as well, if the individual sought a diversity of religious expression; but it remained central for all its initiates. In this feature it was, like Christianity, in no sense a national cult. Its points of resemblance to the religion of Christ, in its moral emphasis and its hope for the future, as well as in the observance of the first day of the week, were so obvious that it was branded by Tertullian as a diabolic imitation. Its weakness lay in the fact that it was exclusively a religion for men, but it spread through the army and was able to make definite headway, except in those provinces where Christianity was most flourishing. The modern visitor to Rome is made aware of its presence by the altar of Mithras that stands under the Church of San Clemente. He may, perhaps, be surprised to learn that this was but one of the very numerous minor centers of this cult, which seems to have had its central altar very close to where St. Peter's now stands.

The position occupied by the Sun in the rites of Mithras is obvious and in this is seen a kinship with the cult which Julia

Domna attempted to institute at Rome, and the worship of the Sun-god El-gabal. This is a devotion which we see steadily gaining in imperial favor until Aurelian appears to justify Elgabalus by officially instituting the cult of Sol Invictus, which was evidently the religion of Constantine before his acceptance of Christianity. Aurelian fostered this cult without attempting to interfere with the observance of the ancient Roman cults, but apparently hoping eventually to supplant them by a monotheism in which the Sun would be central.

He no doubt hoped also in this way to stem the progress of Christianity and there was probably some connection between his propagation of this cult, which he brought from the East, and his persecution of the Church.

During the time of the Severi another movement arose which was destined still more seriously to oppose the spread of Christianity. At Alexandria lectures were delivered by Ammonius Saccas which were attended by an extraordinary audience which included not only pagans, but also intellectual Christians such as Origen. The outstanding disciple of Ammonius, Plotinus, later settled in Rome where he gathered about him a group that included the Emperor Gallienus and Salonina, his empress. We know nothing of Plotinus but what comes to us through his pupil Porphyry, who had previously been a Christian. He was apparently a Platonic philosopher of rather austere type, who was held in great reverence by his pupil. His philosophy seems to have been a synthesis which combined various elements from Pythagoras, Zeno and Aristotle with the teachings of Plato in such a way that it could accommodate itself to polytheism. The important thing about it was that it was not merely a philosophical system, but combined essentially religious elements with its philosophy in such a way that there was no need to disturb the traditional beliefs and practices of simple people. It was actually the last attempt of Greek philosophy to offer an explanation of the universe. This time the attempt assumed a definitely religious form and thus it became a serious rival to Christianity. It had the immediate effect of inducing Christian teachers to philosophize in the realm of religion, and thus was definitely influential in helping to bring into existence a systematic theology in the Church. Some Christian teachers actually made use of ideas taken from Plotinus. How extensive was its influence may be seen in the fact that it was Neo-Platonism that led Julian the Apostate to abandon the form of Christian teaching in which he had been trained, while it also led St. Augustine to the threshold of the Church.

With the accession of the soldier-emperors the Roman state once more assumed the offensive and took definite steps against the Christians in all parts of the Empire. Apparently it was the rulers of the Church who were singled out for particular attention. While the persecution was of short duration, it was extremely severe. With Gordian the policy of toleration was revived, and Philip the Arabian, who succeeded him, was reported to be a Christian, but the limit of his Christianity appears to have been his willingness to conform to some outward observances of the Christians in the hope of winning the favor of their God. There is no evidence in his coinage of his having been a Christian, and we know that he celebrated games at Rome with pagan rites.

In Decius the Church met for the first time an emperor who was determined to extirpate the Christian religion. This resolution was not the result of popular clamor; but arose from his own initiative, for he was apparently convinced that the Church was the most deadly foe that Rome had to face, since the Christians were outspoken in their scorn for the Roman deities. St. Cyprian says that Decius would rather have seen a rival emperor proclaimed than have witnessed the appointment of a Bishop of Rome in the place of Fabian, who was executed early in the course of the persecution. We have not the text of Decius' edict, but apparently not only all Christians, but even those who were suspected of having leanings towards Christianity, were commanded to offer a sacrifice or libation, or to participate in the sacred feasts of the pagans. Those who complied with these commands were given certificates stating that they had participated in pagan sacrifices, and several of these certificates have been found among Egyptian papyri. It was the clergy and the more prominent among the laity who were sought out first. The confessors of the Faith suffered hunger, thirst and other tortures in prison until they were brought to deny their religion. There were numerous executions, some by burning at the stake, for it was hoped that the total destruction of the body would render void the hope of resurrection.

Large numbers of Christians showed deplorable weakness in the face of persecution. Dionysius of Alexandria says: "The apostasy was universal, many important persons came forward of their own accord; the leaders allowed themselves to be brought by those beneath or by their colleagues. . . . The crowd gathered for the spectacle laughed them to scorn; all saw that they were cowards, as much afraid to sacrifice as to die. Others, with more effrontery, rushed to the altars, protesting that they never had been Christians. . . . A certain number were arrested. Of these, some persevered so far as to endure chains and imprisonment, even for a considerable time; but, before being brought before the tribunal, they abjured. Others were only overcome by torture."

St. Cyprian vividly describes the state of the Christians in North Africa that made them fall so easy a prey to persecution and show such weakness when put to the test. "Each one was desirous of increasing his estate; and forgetful of what believers had either done before in the time of the apostles, or always ought to do, they, with the insatiable ardor of covetousness, devoted themselves to the increase of their property. Among the priests there was no devotedness of religion; among the ministers [deacons] there was no sound faith; in their works there was no mercy; in their manners there was no discipline. In men, their beards were defaced; in women their complexion was dyed: the eyes were falsified from what God had made them; their hair was stained with falsehood. Crafty frauds were used to deceive the hearts of the simple, subtle meanings for circumventing the brethren. They united in the bond of marriage with unbelievers; they prostituted the members of the Church to the Gentiles. They would swear not only rashly, but even more, would swear falsely; would despise those set over them with haughty swelling, would speak evil of one another with envenomed tongue, would quarrel with one another with obstinate hatred. Not a few Bishops, who ought to furnish both exhortation and example to others, despising their divine charge, became agents in secular business, forsook their throne, deserted their people, wandered about over foreign provinces, hunted the markets for gainful merchandise, brought no aid to their starving brethren in the Church. They sought to possess money in hoards, they seized estates by crafty deceits, they increased their gains by multiplying usuries. . . ."

It is interesting to observe the close association which the Bishop of Carthage finds between moral weakness and apostasy, and the use of cosmetics and dyes to falsify the outward appearance. His words should dispel the unfounded myth which has at times been current regarding the absolute purity of life and doctrine among those whom they have chosen to call the primitive Christians. To a certain extent it was the Protestant reformers who idealized the Christians of the first three centuries, despite the irrefutable evidence of both the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church. Christians have always been human beings with the weaknesses and failings that are characteristic of human nature. In every age there have been those who have risen to sublime heights of spiritual attainment. Each age has also had its quota of weak, inconsistent and unworthy Christians. As we approach the persecution of Diocletian and the triumph of the Church, it is most important that the misleading myth of the preeminent virtue of the majority of the members of the Church in its age of primitive purity be completely dispelled at the outset.

St. Cyprian is quite as illuminating as Dionysius of Alexandria in his account of the behavior of the Christians at the beginning of the persecution. He tells of how, at the first words of the threatening foe, the greatest number of the brethren betrayed their faith, being cast down not by the onset of the persecution but by their own voluntary lapse. He describes their haste to deny before they could be seized or questioned. It is a dismal and disillusioning picture of instability and weakness that is presented to us. Yet there were also a goodly number of martyrs. We have already mentioned Pope Fabian. In Smyrna a priest was seized together with a number of the faithful while they were celebrating the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. Bishop Saturninus was put to death at Toulouse, while the Bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem died in prison. At Rome it was impossible to choose a successor for Pope Fabian for fifteen months. Not only orthodox Christians, but heretics as well, were put to death. An interesting fact comes to light from the Acts of one of the martyrs in this persecution. This document makes it clear that the term "Catholic" is no longer used merely with its earlier significance of "Universal," but that it has come also to be used to distinguish the members of the Church which has preserved the teaching and fellowship of the Apostles, from the members of the various heretical sects that have arisen.

The reign of Decius lasted only two years, but it left a sad heritage for the future. It had aimed to weaken the prestige of the Church by making apostates, rather than martyrs. The fact that so many did deny the Faith made apparent the decline and corruption that had set in, particularly among the Christians of wealth and position, during the years that followed the reign of Septimius Severus when the Church was relatively unmolested. In studying the reign of Constantine we shall meet with the problems created after the persecution when the apostates attempted to be restored to the Church, as well as by the bitter strife between confessors and bishops, and the schism that arose between the advocates of laxity and of severity. These were problems that demanded careful thought and profound charity for their solution.

Gallus, who succeeded Decius, issued an edict which attempted to compel the Christians to offer sacrifice. This resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of the new Pope Cornelius. It was the disasters that befell the Church at this time that brought into existence a definite organization of relief for Christians who were held in captivity. It was Valerian, however, who instigated the next advance in the methods and aims of persecution of the Christians. At the beginning of his reign he appeared to be friendly to the Church. In the dispute that arose regarding the Church property at Antioch, where Paul of Samosata had shown himself to be a most unworthy bishop, unsound both in faith and in morals, he adjudged that the property should be awarded to those Christians who were in communion and agreement with the Bishop of Rome. It was not long, however, before he was persuaded by his minister Macrinus, in the face of the dangers incident to a barbarian invasion, to seek to restore unity among his subjects by a renewed and intensified persecution.

St. Cyprian, who was the most distinguished victim of this persecution, has left us in the last but one of his letters an account of the methods that were adopted. The profession of Christianity was now defined for the first time as an offence to which definite penalties were attached. However dreadful the persecutions of the past had been, they had lacked careful legal definition of the offence. In the time of Tertullian all that could be said was: "Non licet vos esse." ("It is not lawful for you to exist.") Now the penalties were elaborately codified and graduated. They were to be invariable and were to continue in force for posterity. Senators and Knights were not only to lose their rank, but were to sacrifice the right to possess property. If they still persisted, they were to be put to death. Ladies of the same rank were to be despoiled of their property and to be sent into exile penniless. Free members of the imperial household, if they were or ever had been Christians, were to lose their freedom and to become chattels of the Emperor's private treasury. In addition to this they were to be sent in chained gangs to work on the Emperor's domains.

This persecution aimed both to deprive the Church of its leaders, and also to impoverish it by confiscations which would enrich the State. Numerous martyrdoms followed. As though in anticipation of this attack, which would deprive the Christians of their burying-places, the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul were at this time removed from their respective basilicas and taken to a place of safekeeping on the Appian Way, called "Ad Catacumbas." During this persecution Pope Sixtus II was martyred together with four of his deacons. The remaining deacons followed. St. Lawrence, the last of the seven, was roasted on a gridiron. By the following year St. Cyprian was beheaded at Carthage, while numerous bishops and other clergy were put to death in Numidia, Spain, and various parts of the West. In the East, where popular sympathy favored the Christians, martyrdoms were fewer in number and seem to have been limited to those who came forward voluntarily and made profession of their religion.

When Valerian became the captive of the Persian King, his son Gallienus succeeded him. He was a thoroughly weak emperor, but he did, whether because of the disasters that had befallen the State or at the instigation of his wife Salonina is uncertain, issue the first edict of toleration in A.D. 261. Now ensued a period of nearly half a century during which the Church was free from persecution. It is not likely that Gallienus investigated the teachings of Christianity. What he did was to grant the Christians the status of a lawful religion, just as was granted to the cult of Mithras. He had not the power to enforce an universal toleration, but his edict, combined with the chaos attendant upon divided authority in the time of the pretenders and of his weak successors, was sufficient to ensure for the Church during that period its right to exist as a lawful organization and also its right to possess property. Aurelian, at the beginning of his reign, recognized these same rights, but later issued an edict of persecution. He died, however, before the provisions of this edict could be put into execution.

During the forty years between the rescript of Gallienus and the accession of Diocletian the Church, although not technically, as it was between the proclamations of Gallienus and Aurelian, a lawful religion, was none the less left undisturbed. Persecution had proved that it was incapable of destroying the Church. Eusebius tells us that during this period Christians rose to positions of eminence, even becoming governors of provinces. Although the Christians were still a minority in every province of the Empire, they exerted an influence far out of proportion to their numbers.

What were the main causes of this influence? The Church had an organization that worked smoothly and that was practically uniform in all parts of the Empire. As the city became less and less a center of culture during the period that the provinces were becoming increasingly barbarized, the bishop of the Christian community became more and more a person of great importance in each local center. He was the administrator of a vast system of charities and benevolences. Widows and orphans, the sick and the infirm, the aged and the unemployed were cared for. The succor of those who were imprisoned for their Faith during the period of persecution had developed into provision for the ransoming of Christians made prisoners by barbarians. The burial of the indigent dead, the care of slaves, and hospitality for strangers who were Christians, also assumed their place in the program of the Church. Both in the administration of these works of mercy and through gifts and bequests the Church came to possess a great deal of property. These possessions increased the prestige of the bishop, while if, as in the case of St. Cyprian and others, he had unusual gifts in preaching, his position was thereby strengthened.

While never enjoying imperial favor, as Mithraism did, the Church was constantly increasing in numbers and in influence. Not only was it spreading constantly within the Empire, but missionaries such as Gregory Thaumaturgos were extending its organization and influence outside the frontiers in the East. Through contact with new streams of thought, as well as through discussion like that regarding the teachings of Sabellius between Pope Dionysius and Dionysius of Alexandria, the Church was developing a systematic theology and her teaching was more and more expressed in language which would be intelligible and attractive to the more learned elements in society. In fact, the Church stands out, and must so have appeared to many of the subjects of the Empire during this period, as the one hope both materially and spiritually for men. Not only had persecution signally failed to impede the progress of the Church, but a period free from molestation was bringing into its fold persons from all ranks of society, unfortunately waverers, weak and unstable members, as well as the strong and resolute.

There were, however, other obstacles to the steady growth and progress of the Church which did not cease to operate with the cessation of persecution. Towards the end of this period Manichaeism made its way into the Empire, and continued to attract followers until it reached its zenith at the time when St. Augustine was one of its followers (373--382). It persisted in the Empire until the middle of the fifth century. Mani had begun his preaching in 242 under the patronage of Sapor I and was put to death by another Sassanian monarch of Persia thirty years later.

The religion of Mani recognized two principles, Light and Darkness, both of which were eternal. They were originally distinct, but in time became confused. The means of again separating them has now appeared and in the future they will again be distinct. All that is orderly, peaceful, intelligent and clear is associated with the principle of Light, while with that of Darkness is associated all that is anarchic, rebellious, material and obscure. Evil began when Darkness invaded Light and that was the cause of the creation of man. The Fall was thus anterior to creation. The present world, which is composed of parts of the demons of Darkness, is now in the process of imprisoning the realm of Darkness and of recovering from the Archons of Darkness the elements of Light which they have consumed. The Archons, despite the restraint to which they were subjected, produced vegetable and animal life, as well as Adam, to whom Jesus appeared and bade him stand up and taste of the Tree of Life. Hence it was Jesus, not the devil, who made man conscious of his state of wretchedness. It is a strange admixture of Oriental mysticism with bits of a thoroughly heretical Christianity, in which asceticism is greatly stressed; and the final judgment will be pronounced according to men's treatment of the Elect, the true Manichees, who abstained from meat and wine, from marriage and property, and had no fixed abodes. They might not sow nor even break their own bread, but were served by the Hearers. They were in no sense regarded as penitents, but as those who had already attained to holiness. "Jesus, Who appeared in Judaea," was regarded as the greatest of the prophets before Mani himself, but his humanity was only apparent. By this assumption of a certain relation to Christianity Manichaeism became a deadly enemy of true Christian teaching and much of its doctrine and practice persisted well into the Middle Ages associated with the names of the Bogomiles, the Cathari, and the Albigensians.

Moreover there had been divisions among Christians themselves from the very earliest days. We read even in the pages of the New Testament of sects which perverted Christian teachings. Very early in the history of the Church appeared the Gnostics, who would have made the religion of Christ merely an introduction to the ultimate truth to which they alone held the key. This "barbarized and orientalized Platonism," as it has been called quite aptly, was in reality not Christian at all, but was a combination of Greek idealism and Oriental dualism. Yet it became associated with Christianity to such an extent that it caused serious problems for the Church. Judaizing and anti-Judaizing tendencies produced heresies and sects. The ecstatic experiences of Montanus and the fresh revelations that were announced through his prophecies brought into existence another sect that sought to impose private oracles as a supplement to the original deposit of faith. The fiery temperament of Tertullian responded to this heresy and the one-time ardent protagonist of the Church turned his vitriolic pen against his former brethren. The first attempts to philosophize about the divinity of Christ and His relation to the Father were already preparing the way for the mighty struggle against the novel teaching of Arius that was to be so important a part of the activity of the Church during the reign of Constantine. The Church had not yet fully explained all the details of the Faith in language acceptable to the philosopher, and, in rejecting the false teaching of Sabellius, had refused to use the very word *"homoousios"* ("of the same substance"), which was to become the test of orthodoxy at the Council of Nicaea.

Throughout the various controversies and divisions which had found their place in the life of the Church during the first two and a half centuries of its existence, Rome had constantly played a central part in upholding the Faith as it had been originally received and propagated. Time and again, without entering into the niceties of philosophical explanations, the Pope was found bearing witness to the articles of Christian belief and, as the pillar of orthodoxy, interpreting them in time of controversy and schism.

This then was the state of the Church when Diocletian became emperor. It had expanded, not only throughout the Empire, but even beyond its borders. In the south and west portions of Asia Minor and Thrace Christians may have constituted as much as half the population; in Italy south of the Rubicon, Macedonia and Greece, Syria, northern Egypt and the African provinces and in south-west Spain, they constituted at least a very formidable minority; in Italy between the Alps and the Rubicon, Pannonia (roughly Hungary), Moesia (roughly Serbia and Bulgaria), Palestine with the neighboring Arabia, and the Greek cities on the coast of Phoenicia, while not numerous, the Christians were making headway. In northern Gaul, Britain and other remote outposts the Church was still quite weak. In Pontus the efforts of Gregory Thaumaturgos had recently been rewarded with remarkable success.

In the tremendous religious revival that marked the opening years of Diocletian's reign Neo-Platonism and Mithraism appeared to be the chief external rivals of Christianity. The real rival, however, was the official worship of the Emperor and Rome, which claimed supremacy. Materially the Church had much to show in increased buildings, lands and possessions. The position of the bishop was becoming more and more that of a leader in many cities. But the increasing number of converts from the ranks of philosophers and students demanded a fresh and more technical statement of Christian doctrine on certain basic teachings. This need was certain to put a great strain on the Church in view of the differences in temperament, background, and education among her members. The last persecutions had left the Church an unhappy legacy of disputes and divisions. The growth in numbers and influence was to some degree offset by the instability of many of those who had become converts in times that were free from persecution or who, through several generations of inherited Christianity, had lost the zeal and earnestness of those who had preceded them. The spirit of syncretism and the desire for unity were characteristic of the times. The love of disputation, especially in the Greek East, was also a force to be reckoned with. While growing in numbers and in extent, Christianity was not technically a lawful religion in the Empire; and persecution might at any time be renewed. If it came it would find the Church, while apparently stronger than before, actually weakened by problems, divisions, and the instability which was the inevitable result of a period of extended peace.

Throughout this period which we have reviewed there is to be observed both in works of art and in the coinage a gradual spiritualization. This can be seen in the upward turned eyes of Constantine on the coin which has been selected for the frontispiece of this book. Was this merely an artistic convention, or was it the outward evidence of a transformation of thought that was in progress? Is it to be attributed to the gradual infiltration of the Christian element into the thought and outlook of men, or is it, perhaps, the evidence of a spiritual need that was being more and more consciously felt, which a liberated Christianity might satisfy?

Chapter III

DIOCLETIAN AND THE LAST PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS

We have already described briefly the scene of Diocletian's proclamation as Emperor. It may be well to review the events that preceded it. The death of Carus had been surrounded by mystery. He had been quite successful in his campaign against the Persians when, during a thunderstorm, his tent was seen on fire. Some said that he was struck by lightning. Others maintained that he died of natural causes, but failed to specify the nature of the illness. It was said that his tent had been set on fire by his servants in their grief because of his death. This, at all events, was the statement made by his secretary. Then, on the homeward march, occurred the equally mysterious death of his son Numerian. It was obvious that Diocles, the commander of the household troops, was in a position to know something of of the facts. When Aper, the father-in-law of Numerian and his Praetorian Prefect, openly admitted his guilt before the assembly of generals who were investigating the circumstances of that death, Diocles slew him, apparently before he had an opportunity to make any statement. Diocles seems to have entered the assembly with an authority that was recognized by the generals, who immediately proclaimed him Emperor.

Vopiscus, whose authority as an historian is open to serious suspicion, relates a tale which he says that he heard from his grandfather who was present at the assembly. This story is at least interesting and, if true, would offer a plausible explanation of the part that Diocles played in this mysterious drama. According to this tale, as soon as Diocles had slain Aper he said, "Well you may boast, Aper," and then continued in the words of Vergil, " 'Tis by the hand of the mighty Aeneas that you perish." The story goes on to relate that at an earlier time, when Diocles was serving in a minor post, he was once stopping at a certain tavern at Tungri in Gaul. When he was paying his daily reckoning at that place, the woman of the tavern, who was a Druidess, said to him, "You are far too greedy and stingy." To this Diocles replied, in jest, it was said, "I shall be generous enough when I become Emperor." At this the Druidess said, "Do not jest, for you will become Emperor when you have slain a boar." Now in Latin a boar is *aper*. According to this story, when he had killed Aper, Diocles said, "At last I have killed my fated Boar."

Whether as the vindicator of the murdered Emperors, or through treachery and duplicity, Diocles had now attained the object of his ambition. No longer was he Diocles, but Diocletian. From such evidence as is now available it would seem that he achieved that which he had so long desired in exactly the same way as the military emperors of the worst period. His first act was to call the Sun-god to witness his innocence and thus to try to clear himself of all complicity in the death of Numerian. What was the significance of this oath? It is at least a possible explanation that he had been fully cognizant of the murder of Numerian and had acquiesced in it with the definite purpose of informing against Aper later. Aper would have been the most serious rival to the ambitions of Diocles and, had he been given the opportunity to speak, it is conceivable that he might have had something quite incriminating to reveal regarding him.

What sort of person was this man who now became Emperor? Like Claudius and Aurelian, he was an Illyrian, but of more obscure origin than they. By some it was said that he was the son of a freedman; by other that both of his parents were slaves. In spite of his lowly origin he had held minor posts in Gaul under Aurelian, had been governor in Moesia under Carus, had already held the consulship, and, at the time of his proclamation, was commander of the household troops. His name Diocles appears to have been taken from the town Doclia, where his mother was born. Whether slave or freedman, his father seems to have been a scribe. Although trained as a soldier under Probus, this Illyrian of lowly birth was unquestionably much more than a mere soldier. His interest was apparently focused on questions of administration rather than on the purely military problems. We are told that he was "an outstanding man and wise, devoted to the common weal, also devoted to his kindred, duly prepared to face whatever the occasion demanded, forming plans that were always deep though sometimes over-bold, also one who could by prudence and great firmness hold in check the impulses of a restless spirit." Aurelius Victor says that he was "ever scheming for the welfare of the Empire, and, although its lord and master, he conducted himself as the father of his people." Of his ambition there is no question. He devoted his genius to the solution of varied problems, administrative, financial, military; and effected changes of far-reaching importance which were further developed by Constantine. He had to a pronounced degree that sense of the dignity of the Roman Empire which characterized the Illyrian Emperors. He fully realized that the time had arrived when drastic innovations must be made. Conditions on all sides had undergone tremendous changes and new methods must be devised to meet the new situation. Yet he preserved a strong reverence for the past and an unwillingness to repudiate its traditions.

Although he had been proclaimed Emperor, there still remained a lawful ruler in Carinus, the elder son of Carus, who had forces under his command that greatly outnumbered those of Diocletian. Carinus must be disposed of before Diocletian's position would be secure. The biographer of Carinus describes him in terms that indicate utter moral depravity, yet he cannot have been devoid of considerable ability in generalship. He was obliged to leave the Rhine without sufficient protection—a policy that was to prove disastrous later—to muster a large army with which to crush a revolt in Illyricum. When this had been accomplished he had to confront Diocletian. He was successful in both undertakings, but in the battle of the Margus valley he was slain by a tribune whose wife he had seduced. Thus, at about thirty-eight years of age, the ambitious Illyrian became the unopposed Emperor of the entire Roman Empire. His attitude towards those who had held office under his predecessor was from the outset conciliatory. The friends and adherents of Carinus were treated with the utmost leniency and Carinus' Praetorian Prefect, Aristobulus, was continued in office.

Of all the problems that confronted Diocletian the most pressing was that of the frontiers. They must be defended, yet the expense must not be too great for the Empire, already in a tottering financial state, to sustain. For a long time past military revolts had seriously menaced the stability of the Emperor's position. So long as victorious legions might proclaim their generals Emperor, each successive Emperor must look forward to a brief period, insufficient to make effective the greatly needed reforms, brought to a close by a sudden and violent death. Reverence and respect for the head of the State had disappeared. How could this be restored? With the decline of the Senate, the old conflict between the Senate and the armies had vanished. But something more radical was needed. The old powers of the Senate must be utterly abrogated and at the same time the army must be put in its proper place. Now that prosperity was no more and the strength of municipal life had decayed, the constant problems of finance had become increasingly insistent and new ways must be devised to maintain the unity of the far-flung Empire. The situation was one that demanded gifts of statesmanship even more than military aptitude, and these were the very qualities that Diocletian and his contemporaries were convinced that he possessed to a high degree.

From the very beginning of his reign it was his aim to reform and reconstitute the administration of the Empire in every department in response to the new situation. All of his measures tended towards the development of an absolute monarchy of the Oriental type, but this was a process that had been working gradually throughout the preceding century. However mistaken some of the measures inaugurated by Diocletian may appear in the light of subsequent history, he unquestionably regarded them as the only means by which peace and unity, stability and security could be attained. The machinery of government had broken down; invasions of barbarians within the frontiers of the Empire were frequent; the prestige that had belonged to the Empire in the past had vanished; the financial crisis had become constantly more acute as taxes rose, poverty increased and prices became more and more excessive; while the debased currency was now worth about one-fortieth of its nominal value. The problems that confronted Diocletian were staggering, but he did have, what few of his predecessors for a long time appear to have had, a real vision of the possibilities of renewed Roman imperialism.

If his reforms were to be effective the dignity of his office must be revived and it must evoke the reverence which would give it both stability and power. Diocletian turned to good account the efforts and aims of several of his predecessors. Caligula had tried to orientalize the Empire, adopting as his model Hellenistic Egypt and fostering the cult of himself and of his family; but republican sentiment was still too strong in Rome to tolerate such innovations. Domitian had introduced the etiquette of Oriental monarchies into his court, but the inevitable outcome was revolt. Aurelian was the first Emperor to succeed in surrounding himself with the outward marks of the absolute rulers of the East. He wore a robe of silk embroidered with gold and adorned with precious stones, or else the purple cloak of the military commander, which Septimius Severus had introduced. It is possible that Aurelian may also have worn the diadem, but its introduction is generally ascribed to Diocletian, while Constantine is said to have assumed the gold band around the head, known as the *nimbus*. One can readily imagine what would have been the reactions of Augustus to this ceremonial. But the Empire of Diocletian was very different from that of Augustus. The *Imperator* was only a successful military commander and the First Citizen of an Italian town that had now passed into insignificance. No longer was Rome the center of gravity. It was now merely a second-rate provincial city. The real center of gravity was in the East. A workaday ruler who scorned pomp and circumstance, confident in the victories of his armies and in his own personal wealth and good fortune, was suited to the days when Rome was the center of the world and when traditions of the republican past were still cherished; but Augustus faced none of the problems that confronted the barbarian who had now succeeded to his title. The etiquette and ceremonial of the court, which Diocletian introduced, had a twofold purpose. They emphasized the sacredness of the absolute monarch's office, and, at the same time, made him aloof and inaccessible to the approach of his subjects. Those who enjoyed the privilege of audience with him approached on bended knee and raised the edge of his robe to their lips. Not only was he called *deus,* but a further development of the cult of the Emperor made its way through the military camps and the provinces. Henceforth the proclamation of an Emperor was heralded by the crowning of his bust, which was carried in procession through the various provinces.

The reform of the army was of primary importance. Never had it been sufficiently large to guard the extensive frontiers. Merely to increase its size would be to accentuate the danger of mutiny and rebellion, of the assassination of emperors and the proclaiming of pretenders. Too long had the soldiery been a serious menace to a peaceful and well-ordered society. Discipline must be revived. Gallienus had made a separation of mobile troops from the rest of the army and this striking force became an essential part of the new military organization of Diocletian, which was continued and perfected by Constantine. Border troops, who were recruited from the local peasantry, were established in permanent stations. The new mobile forces were stationed at strategic points whence they could be readily rushed wherever they were needed. The Emperor himself must also be mobile, having no fixed place of residence, free to move rapidly from province to province. A mobile staff was now of greater importance to him than the conventional retinue of court officials appropriate to a fixed imperial residence. Not only was the size of the army greatly increased, but the needs of frontier defense also entailed additional fortifications and paved roads in the more remote provinces. All these measures involved the Empire in vastly increased expense.

A fresh division of the Empire was also indicated both to ensure a more efficient administration and to remove the constant danger of revolt on the part of provincial commanders. The provinces had been unwieldy and a dangerous amount of power had been concentrated in the hands of provincial governors. Now the number of provinces was increased to more than one hundred, which were, in turn, grouped in thirteen *dioceses,* and these were still further subdivided into four prefectures, each under a Praetorian Prefect. The control of the provinces was now committed to civil administrators. The *dux* and the *praeses,* whose functions were sharply differentiated, now of equestrian rank, superseded the *proconsul* and the *legatus* of the past.

If reforms were to be permanent and effective the vexed question of the succession must be settled once and for all. Diocletian had no son to succeed him. Had he been able, he would no doubt have established a dynastic succession. As it was he had to adopt a practice of the past and select a Caesar who would succeed him. He chose another Illyrian, a fellow-officer who also had risen from the ranks, but one who was far inferior to his chief in both intellectual and moral qualities. Of Maximian, who was selected for this post, Lactantius says that he was like Diocletian in inclinations and purposes, but that, while Diocletian was more avaricious and less resolute, Maximian had a bolder spirit, prone to evil. He says that he cared little for the treasures he had the opportunity to amass from the rich provinces at hand, but preferred to satisfy his greed through suborning evidence against the richest Senators and thus extinguishing the foremost men of the State, while constantly indulging his lust without restraint. Eutropius paints a most unattractive picture of him, describing him as "manifestly fierce, of an unamiable nature, one who showed the bitterness of his disposition even by his grim countenance." The contemporary writers provide ample evidence of his ferocity and unbridled license.

Maximian was, however, quite the right man for the command on the frontiers. He was an expert military leader and apparently devotedly loyal to Diocletian. It was in the summer of 285 A.D., only a few months after the beginning of his reign, that Diocletian appointed Maximian as Caesar. At the same time apparently Diocletian gave to himself the title of Jovius and to his Caesar that of Herculius. These titles were the outward mark of Diocletian's conception of the true nature of the imperial office—or at least of the interpretation of its nature which he wished to have generally accepted—and were as well a clear evidence of the relationship that existed between the Emperor and his Caesar. It was not sufficient merely to surround the imperial person with the trappings of regal supremacy and aloofness. It must be made evident that his position had divine sanction. In fact the genius of Diocletian and Maximian must be made to appear as the genius of Jupiter and Hercules who are working through them. Where generally accepted, the doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings" gives a security and stability which can be derived from no other source. Once a rule of legitimate succession based on divine sanction has been established, the danger of revolution is definitely minimized. The obscure origin of the Emperor and his Augustus was now covered by a veil which substituted for the authority once bestowed by the Senate, later by the choice of a victorious army, an authority now divinely bestowed and indisputable. Jupiter, the father of gods and of men, bestowed upon the Emperor the sanction of supreme rule, while Hercules, the pacifier of the earth, indicated what the Caesar's function was to be.

Probably the disordered state of Gaul was the immediate occasion of the appointment of Maximian. Carus had laid open the frontier to fresh attacks from the Germans. Pirates were active on the seas. The *Bagaudae,* a band of deserters, who had apparently abandoned the farm, the army, or the peaceful pursuit of trade in the town, were waging guerilla warfare with considerable success. After he had successfully suppressed this uprising, Maximian was proclaimed Augustus early in April, 286.

This proclamation seemed to involve but slight change in

Maximian's status. Each Augustus had his own army, his own Praetorian Prefect, and his own treasury. Edicts and rescripts were issued in their joint names, but Diocletian continued to initiate all legislation. There was no division of empire. Rome itself had passed into obscurity and the various provinces with their respective capitals were to receive their just recognition. Diocletian, the Illyrian, knew little or nothing of Rome and had never lived there. He generally resided at Nicomedia, while Maximian made his headquarters at Milan. Yet each of them is frequently to be found engaged in campaigns quite remote from his usual place of residence.

For the next two years Maximian was occupied with the restoration of order on the German frontier. Carausius, the commander of the fleet, had now taken possession of Britain. For some time he had been engaged in establishing trading colonies around the coasts of Britain and Ireland. He was successful in clearing the English Channel of pirates, but retained for himself the chief part of the booty. By this means he greatly increased the size of his fleet, which he manned with some of the pirates he had made captive. Maximian sent orders for his execution, but Carausius replied by proclaiming himself Augustus, and proceeded to transfer his fleet to Britain. When Maximian set out against him with a naval expedition he was so unsuccessful that for the time at least it seemed best to give tacit recognition to Carausius, who had now reestablished his position at Gesoriacum (Boulogne) and, relying on the loyalty of the British and with the Franks of the Low Country as his allies, had set up an independent empire. It became increasingly evident that the two Augusti would need further assistance, if revolts were to be suppressed and the Emperor's authority maintained.

Diocletian's next step was the appointment of two Caesars to assist the two Augusti. By this appointment a board of rulers was established in which presumably the question of the succession would be finally settled, for a Caesar would automatically succeed on the death or abdication of an Augustus. Moreover it would be quite a different thing to undertake the assassination of four rulers, while a single ruler could be eliminated by a single blow. Lactantius attributes this change to avarice and timidity and regards the increased financial expense which it involved as responsible for universal poverty and dismay. This was hardly a just verdict to pronounce on what was obviously an attempt to meet the exigencies of the times with a new machinery of government. Maximian's son, Maxentius, was passed over in these appointments, on the ground that he was too young. On March 1, 293, C. Galerius Valerius, who assumed the name of Maximinianus, but who is commonly known as Galerius, was named Caesar by Diocletian at Nicomedia. At Milan Maximian appointed as his Caesar the Praetorian Prefect, C. Flavius Valerius Constantius, who came to be known at a later time as Constantius Chlorus, "The Pale." As Diocletian had adopted Maximian, so now the Caesars were adopted by their respective Augusti and received their names. Thus two families were established which were known as the Jovii and the Herculii. A further dynastic unification was effected by marriage. Constantius had already repudiated his *concubina,* or, as we should say, his morganatic wife, Helena, who was the mother of a young son destined to become the future Emperor, Constantine, and had married Maximian's step-daughter, Theodora. Galerius was now required to divorce his wife and to marry Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian. Constantius became the senior of the two Caesars.

Each Caesar as well as each Augustus had tribunician power and was permitted to issue coins. Now a territorial division of the Empire was made also. Diocletian, with his residence at Nicomedia, assumed responsibility for the Far East; Bithynia, Arabia, Libya, Egypt and Syria, while his Caesar, Galerius, with his residence at Sirmium (Mitrovitz near Belgrade), had Dalmatia, Pannonia, Moesia, Thrace and Asia Minor assigned to him. Maximian continued to reside normally at Milan, receiving as his share Rome, Italy, Rhaetia, Sicily, Sardinia, Spain and the remainder of Africa; while Constantius had Gaul and Britain, although the latter was at this time actually subject to Carausius.

Of the two Caesars it is difficult to arrive at a just estimate. Galerius, the real instigator of the persecution of the Christians, must have appeared to Christian writers as the very incarnation of all that is evil. Lactantius says that he was "worse than all the bad princes of former days." "In him," he says, "dwelt a native barbarity and savageness that was foreign to Roman blood; and no wonder, for his mother was born beyond the Danube and an inroad of the Carpi forced her to cross over and take refuge in New Dacia. Tall of stature, full of flesh and swollen to a horrible bulk of corpulency, by his speech, his gestures and his looks, he made himself a terror to all who came near him. His father-in-law dreaded him exceedingly."

Galerius was unfortunate in his first expedition against the Persians. He crossed the Euphrates only to meet with utter defeat at the hands of Narses. Ammianus Marcellinus relates that on his return, clad in purple, he was made to walk for nearly a mile before the chariot of Diocletian, so angry was his Augustus at his defeat. On his second campaign, however, Galerius showed his military ability and achieved a complete success. He stampeded the Persian cavalry by night and captured a rich booty which included the royal harem. The Persian king had to evacuate Mesopotamia and to conclude a treaty by which the Roman sphere of influence was recognized in the Kingdom of Armenia and all trade between the Persian Empire and the Roman Empire was compelled to pass through the

Roman garrison town of Nisibis, where customs were levied. Lactantius tells us that this victory was easily accomplished because the Persians were heavily impeded with baggage, and he goes on to relate that Galerius was so arrogant over the victory that he increased Diocletian's fears, while his overweening desire to become an Augustus made him willing to claim divine descent even at the expense of calling his mother an adulteress.

In the city of Salonica today almost the first sight that greets the visitor who arrives by boat is the impressive arch which celebrates the victory of Galerius over the Persians. It is a Roman arch with bas-reliefs about the base which are so blurred that for a long time a dispute was waged with regard to its age. It is the train of camels together with the name of the river Tigris that have identified it as commemorating this victory of Galerius. On the arch the Emperor's bodyguards wear the scale-armor of the *cataphracti,* heavy cavalry characteristic of the Persians which have now been introduced into the Roman armies. The typical Iranian conical helmet can also be observed as well as the Persian standards, which are Iranian *dracones,* serpents flying and hissing with the gaping jaws of a wild animal. Before this time these had been regarded as barbarian and foreign, but they had now found an established place in the Roman armies. From this time onward there is evidence that Persian garments and ceremonial made distinct advances at the court of Diocletian. Persian monarchs were not so readily murdered by their bodyguards and Diocletian realized that it is lawful to learn even from one's enemies.

With regard to the character of Constantius Chlorus both Christian and pagan writers are unanimous. For the present it is sufficient to say that he was unquestionably far more cultivated and humane than any of the three rulers with whom he was associated. His claim to descent from the Emperor Claudius Gothicus seems not to have been advanced during his lifetime. He was very popular in his provinces and had already shown marked ability in military achievements. Immediately on his appointment as Caesar he was confronted with a work of primary importance—the suppression of Carausius.

Constantius' first step was to drive Carausius' fleet from the shores of Gaul. Most of it went into hiding at the Isle of Wight. He next proceeded to Gesoriacum (Boulogne), which fell after a short siege. He made a vigorous attack against the Franks and drove them into their swamps and forests. Thus in a short time Carausius' independent empire was reduced to Britain alone. Soon Carausius was murdered by his chief minister, Allectus, who now proclaimed himself Augustus in his stead.

Constantius was obliged to wait for three years before he was able to make an attack on Britain. Then, under the protection of a heavy fog, two fleets made their way separately across the Channel. One of these fleets, under the command of his Praetorian Prefect, Asclepiodotus, escaped detection by the fleet of Allectus which was anchored at the Isle of Wight, and made a successful landing. Asclepiodotus and his men then burned their ships and marched on London. Allectus advanced in haste to meet him, only to be defeated and slain. Constantius, in the meantime, with the other fleet, sailed up the Thames and captured London, which the soldiers of Allectus were engaged in plundering. The result of this victory was the restoration of the whole of Britain to the Roman allegiance.

Constantius also achieved noteworthy success along the German frontier. He settled the Salii, a Frankish tribe, in the section of the Low Countries where Carausius had formerly held sway, and these tribesmen became loyal and peaceful subjects of the Empire. The Alemanni, however, were totally unlike the Franks. They never regarded the sacredness of oaths (a trait which seems to have persisted in their descendants down to our own times), and were constantly ready to make surprise attacks across the frontier. Constantius repelled them and drove them back as far as the Rhine, and, although himself wounded near Langres, he succeeded in reestablishing the authority of the Roman Empire in Gaul.

With the single exception of the first ill-fated expedition of Galerius against the Persians, all of the military undertakings of Diocletian's reign were successful. The frontier problem seemed definitely settled and the danger of nationalist uprisings well under control. In fact Diocletian appeared to have accomplished successfully the greater part of his aims. The establishment of the tetrarchy was obviously a satisfactory answer to the most pressing problems. Stability and permanence had been restored to the rule; the vexed question of the succession had apparently been settled. The division of authority and the new military system had demonstrated its value so far as concerned the frontier. The matter of finance we must leave until later. Ere long all these accomplishments would be shattered, and one potent reason for this failure would be Diocletian's altered policy with regard to religion.

Diocletian had reigned for nearly nineteen years before he undertook the persecution of the Christians. He was then within a little more than two years of relinquishing his rule, although he may not at that time have contemplated abdicating so soon. He had thus far shown himself in no way unfriendly to the Christians. There is no evidence whatever for the statement made by a Byzantine chronicler Zonaras, who wrote early in the twelfth century, that Diocletian visited Rome after the battle of the Margus valley and initiated there the persecution of the Christians at the very beginning of his reign. It is inconceivable, if this were true, that Eusebius and Lactantius should have no knowledge whatever of it. His wife, Prisca, and their daughter, Valeria, if not actually members of the Church, appear at least to have been catechumens. Some of the highest positions at his court and in his household were held by men who were prominent in the Christian community. The Letter of Theonas is generally regarded as spurious, but the situation which it implies—that the Christian chamberlains and officials at the palace at Nicomedia had been selected because of their proved loyalty to the Emperor; that they were urged to display the Christian virtues in their various relationships in the palace, and that in so doing they were effective instruments for the spread of Christianity—all this is probably a true picture of the actual state of things that existed.

Of Diocletian's own religious convictions we know only what is implied in his deeds and in his coinage. Although paganism was developing consistently in the direction of monotheism and the worship of the Sun-god was winning wider acceptance, Diocletian was evidently a polytheist and strongly inclined to superstition. The Olympian Zeus and Apollo, Hecate and Nemesis had temples dedicated by him, but he also restored or dedicated temples to Sol Invictus Mithra, and to Sarapis. It was a time of religious ferment, when men were not ashamed to evince an interest in religious questions and when the man who was utterly devoid of religious interests was rare and hard to find. Neo-Platonism was rehabilitating superstitions which its adherents a short time before would have ridiculed. A fresh interest in oracles was evident, while new mysteries and sacrifices were becoming popular. But the dominant element in Diocletian's religion was unquestionably the Genius of the Roman People, which appeared consistently on his coins for a series of years. For a long time past the Persian kings had provided models to be imitated in various phases of the imperial activity. Among them a state religion gave a solid basis and was a source of strength for autocratic rule. Aurelian had hoped to achieve something of the same sort by unifying the various cults about the worship of the Sun-god. Diocletian aimed, above all else, at the unity of the State. One supreme Emperor, administering one uniform law over a people united by one state religion would achieve this end.

The Christians, although loyal in all things that did not involve apostasy, evidently impeded the achievement of this unity. They had an organization and a law of their own which they regarded as superior to that of the Empire wherever the two conflicted with one another. Thus they were really a state within the state. They had acquired property and buildings to house not only their public worship, but also their many works of charity. Their bishops were beginning to become persons of such consequence in their communities that they would soon supplant the officials of the State as the influential leaders of the people in many sections of the Empire. Moreover in times of pestilence and public calamity the Christians had not limited their work of charity and relief to members of the household of faith, but had extended them freely to pagans, thereby winning, if not favor, at least kindly tolerance from large groups of people who were not themselves Christians. The Christians, who in many instances regarded the gods whom he revered, not as merely nonexistent, but as evil demons, must have seemed to Diocletian revolutionary, both in belief and in practice, even though they had never revolted and had always regarded it as a part of their duty to pray for the Emperor.

Two questions naturally arise: Why did Diocletian wait so long before undertaking the persecution of the Christians? and Why did he initiate the persecution at this particular time? He was by nature conservative and among his predecessors took Marcus Aurelius as his model. In his Edict on Prices he justified his long forbearance to interfere in these financial matters because of his hope that men would improve themselves without the necessity of compulsion. No doubt this same thought was in the background of his mind as he tolerated the Christians year after year, allowing them to increase in numbers and in influence, hoping that eventually they would find a way to accommodate themselves to his ideal of a unified religion for the State. The decree against Manichaeism, which, if it be from his hand, dated from the period when he had most to fear from Persia, definitely established the principle that it is in the highest degree criminal to retract what has once been laid down and defined by the ancients. If this principle be accepted, there is no alternative but to restore all the religious rites and usages of the past. Yet he delayed the persecution of the Christians until nearly the end of his reign.

For nearly forty years the Church had enjoyed relative peace and had risen to a remarkable condition of outward prosperity. Not only had there been freedom from persecution, but special concessions had been granted the Christians by imperial favor. They held high positions in the administrative and financial departments of government and were released from the obligation to participate in heathen sacrifices. We learn from Eusebius that Philoromus, a Christian, was a Justice at Alexandria, while Adauctus was an official of the Treasury in Phrygia. The Church in certain localities apparently tolerated members who held office as *flamen* (although that involved the duty of lighting the sacrificial fires), or as *duumvir*, one of the presiding officers of the local municipal senate, whose duty it was to administer justice. This function could only be performed with the accompaniment of soldiers and with all the outward symbols of Roman authority. It is difficult to explain how such anomalies were permitted. It must have been necessary for these officers to perform, even though in a purely perfunctory way, some of the heathen ceremonies. Eusebius says that Christians who held these offices were excused from offering the customary sacrifices in connection with the performance of their official duties, but Canon 56 of the Council of Elvira prohibits Christians, who hold office as *duumvir,* from participating in Christian worship during the year of their magistracy, and similar restrictions are decreed for those who accept the position of *flamen.* Christians are also found even as governors of provinces. It is obvious that a compromise has been effected between the Church and the world and that the line of demarcation between the two is becoming more and more obscured, and, in some instances, all but obliterated.

The years of peace had also brought great material prosperity to the Church. In the time of Aurelian, Paul of Samosata, the corrupt and heretical bishop of Antioch, was said to live in greater splendor than the Emperor. The buildings that had been erected to house the charitable works of the local churches were extensive and elaborate, while the church buildings, such as that at Nicomedia which looked down on Diocletian's palace, must have been both substantial and ornate. The legislation of a Council held at Illiberis (Elvira) in the south of Spain near Granada, about A.D. 300 would seem clearly to indicate that continued prosperity and freedom from opposition had borne pernicious fruits of worldliness and weakness in the lives of some of the members of the Church. This legislation deals with mixed marriages between Christians and heathens, divorce, cruelty to slaves, ownership of slaves for purposes of sexual indulgence, usury, slander, neglect of Christian worship, gambling, sorcery, attendance at heathen worship; while infidelity among consecrated virgins and scandalous and worldly living among the clergy receive special condemnation. The very fact that a council assembled just before the promulgation of Diocletian's edicts of persecution found it necessary to enact such legislation is clear evidence that individual members of the Church had sunk to much lower standards during the period when persecution was relaxed. Eusebius is most emphatic in assigning what he regards as the causes of the suffering which was about to come on the Church.

"We fell into laxity and sloth and envied and reviled one another . . . people forming parties against people, and monstrous hypocrisy and dissimulation rising to the greatest height of wickedness. Those esteemed our shepherds, casting aside the bond of piety, were excited to conflicts with one another, and did nothing else than heap up strifes and threats and jealousy and enmity and hatred towards each other, like tyrants eagerly attempting to assert their power."

Schism and strife had arisen and Eusebius regards them as the real cause of the persecution. The persecution of Decius in particular had aroused a spirit of faction and jealousy which had dire results. The persecution under Diocletian was, in the eyes of Eusebius, a divine retribution. It is doubtful, however, if divisions and jealousies within the Church in any way influenced Diocletian to discontinue his policy of toleration, and resort to persecution. It is more likely that, had he observed signs of weakness and discord in the Church, he would have delayed still longer taking any definite steps against it. Unity had been Diocletian's central aim in all of the reforms which he had made in the administration of the Empire. Yet his very reforms had led to a tetrarchy in which, while he still retained for himself the supreme authority, the principle of unity had been to a great extent sacrificed. The unity of the Church throughout all parts of the Empire, the perfection of its organization, its constantly growing influence, must have seemed to him a dangerous rival to his own policies and aims. If he were to carry to its logical conclusion the divine sanction which he claimed for the monarchy by placing it under the patronage of Jupiter and Hercules, the extermination of a rival unity that also claimed divine sanction would appear inevitable. Yet he delayed putting into execution the measures that were clearly indicated.

There was apparently something in the nature of a purge of the army in 295, but, so far as we can learn, it is not to be regarded as a religious persecution. The Church had officially condemned military service for a long time. Tertullian and Lactantius both denounced it, and Origen said that the Christian's prayers were his military service. Yet Christians had been in the imperial armies at least from the time of Marcus Aurelius. They must have found ways to accommodate themselves to the military sacrifices just as those who held civil offices were doing. Whatever may have been the cause for a revival of strict discipline in this regard, it was evidently not of great extent nor of long duration.

The really decisive element in determining Diocletian to adopt drastic measures against the Christians seems to have been Galerius' victory over the Persians in 298. Shortly after this victory, at a public sacrifice Galerius was present when Diocletian caused the livers of the victims to be examined for omens, but without avail. The responsibility for this failure was attributed to some of the Christian attendants who had made the sign of the Cross on their foreheads. Although the sacrifices were repeated numerous times all efforts to receive tokens of divination from them proved fruitless. The chief of the soothsayers accused profane persons, meaning Christians, of being present and of interrupting the rites. Diocletian ordered all those who resided in the palace to sacrifice under penalty of being scourged if they refused, and sent orders for all soldiers to sacrifice or face dismissal from the army. Galerius was present at this incident and apparently carried out Diocletian's orders through the master of the soldiery. How many suffered the death penalty under these measures we do not know. Probably they were not numerous. There is great uncertainty regarding the actual dates and the details of the martyrdoms, for the *Acta* come from a much later period. We may be quite certain of the fact of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, but of its date and circumstances we have no certain knowledge. The legend of St. Maurice and of the Theban Legion has been the subject of prolonged dispute, but, despite the absence of early records, there is evidence that it is based on historic fact, although, no doubt, the numbers have been exaggerated and both time and place are uncertain. The five sculptors who refused to make a statue of Aesculapius for Diocletian were probably put to death at a later period after the Emperor's retirement. St. Victor was undoubtedly martyred at this time under Maximian, while under Galerius Julius, Nicander and Marcian were martyred in Moesia. At Tangier the centurion Marcellus threw down his belt and staff at a feast on the Emperor's birthday, saying that his loyalty to Christ would not permit him to serve any other master. Two soldiers at Calahorra in Spain in like manner cast aside their arms. Maximilian, whose Christian father, a veteran of the army, brought his son for enrollment, was forbidden by his conscience to take his place as a soldier in the army of the Emperor although not required to sacrifice. The charge against these martyrs was not their Christian faith, but disloyalty or insubordination. They were martyrs for the Faith from the Christian standpoint but not from the point of view of the pagan officers who condemned them.

It was definitely an anti-Christian sentiment that became active in the general persecution that followed a little later, and this anti-Christian spirit is to be ascribed in all its intensity to Galerius. Galerius, who now because of his Persian victory was greatly in the ascendency, was a native of New Dacia. He had spent his youth in pasturing cattle, whence the name of Armentarius, or herdsman, which continued to cling to him after his elevation. Superstitious and ignorant, he was also a lecherous drunkard. He attempted to rule by terrorism and lacked all the intellectual interests that Diocletian appears to have had. Lactantius calls him "the Beast," and the title seems to have been appropriate. He had a real hatred for Christianity, prompted, no doubt, in part by his own brutal nature and interests, but intensified by the superstitious excesses of his mother, who, we are told by Lactantius, was a devotee of the mountain gods; she sacrificed every day and tried to compel her servants who were Christians to feed on the meat that had been offered to idols. When the Christians refused the meat, but rather took to prayer and fasting, her ire was roused against them and she incited her son, who was equally superstitious, to make away with them. It is interesting to observe, in an age in which women had no recognized legal rights, the immense influence that they were able to exert. This has already been seen in the case of Julia Domna. It is apparent, not only in Romula, the mother of Galerius, but will also be seen in Constantia, the sister of Constantine.

There is also, no doubt, a close connection between the militant anti-Christian attitude of Galerius and the influence exerted at this time by Hierocles and the Neo-Platonists. The earlier Neo-Platonism as set forth by Plotinus and Porphyry, showed a much greater degree of indifference towards the State than was evident in the spokesmen for Christianity. It also soared to intellectual heights unattainable by the ordinary mortal. Hierocles, who had now become governor of Bithynia, belonged to the later school of Neo-Platonism which was able to justify the most superstitious of practices and was marked by a violent opposition to Christianity. He had just issued a book entitled "Philalethes" or "The Truth-lover," in which he attempted to show a number of discrepancies and contradictions in the Scriptures and to make a comparison between Christ and Apollonius of Tyana unfavorable to the divine Founder of Christianity. It is quite possible that Hierocles had himself formerly been a Christian. At all events his influence would certainly have combined with that of Romula to rouse the animosity of Diocletian's Caesar against the Church.

Galerius, who had been taught by his mother from childhood the most debased form of nature-worship, that of the Phrygian goddess, spent the entire winter of 302 with Diocletian at Nicomedia to confer with him regarding the affairs of the Empire. He probably hoped to accomplish the extermination of the Christians, but Diocletian, above all else, wished to avoid bloodshed. He withstood Galerius for a time because he was convinced that exclusion from the court and from the army would prove to be sufficiently effective measures to destroy the influence of the Christians. Some of the civil magistrates and military commanders were summoned to consult with Diocletian and his Caesar with regard to the measures to be adopted. While not unanimous in advocating the ruthless persecution which Galerius demanded, the members of this council were induced, either by their fear of incurring his displeasure or by their desire to win his favor, to concur in his wishes.

Even then Diocletian could not be induced to acquiesce until he had sent to consult the Oracle of Apollo at Miletus. Lactantius tells us that the response of the oracle was as might have been expected. Hierocles had been present at the conference and his book, addressed "to" not "against" the Christians, had now been published. But it is evident that Lactantius and Eusebius are right in regarding Galerius as the real instigator of the persecution.

It has been suggested that the Christians, realizing the deadly enmity of Galerius, had devised a plot to deprive him of the succession and that his long residence in Nicomedia at this time was devoted to investigating this plot. The evidence for the existence of such a plot is very slight, but if Galerius was able to persuade Diocletian that it did exist, this may well have been the decisive factor in inducing him to reverse his former policy. Diocletian was nervous and irritable and perhaps already suffering from the malady which was ere long to bring on a mental derangement and physical collapse. In this condition he would readily yield to plausible arguments. Although in establishing the tetrarchy he had retained the supreme power in his own hands, yet he had in reality given away a part of his independence, and this fact undoubtedly made him more sensitively conscious of the rival unity of the Church.

So, despite his attachment to his wife and daughter, in the face of the devoted loyalty of his Christian chamberlains, Diocletian decided to acquiesce in the policy of Galerius and to begin a general persecution of the Christians, but with the reservation that it should be accomplished without the shedding of blood. An edict was prepared and, on the day preceding its publication, February 23, 303, at daybreak police officers proceeded to the Cathedral Church of Nicomedia. They burst open the doors, pillaged the furnishings, seized and burned the Books of Holy Scripture. Diocletian and Galerius watched the proceedings and debated whether or not the church should be burnt. It was finally levelled to the ground by soldiers with axes and other implements.

This was the inauguration of the general persecution that was aimed at reducing the Church to utter impotence. On the day following the destruction of the Cathedral church at Nicomedia the first of four edicts appeared. It forbade the assembling for Christian worship and commanded that all churches should be levelled to the ground. In this edict the same principles as those found in the rescript of Trajan are evident, but under greatly changed conditions, for at the time of Trajan the Christians had no imposing buildings. The destruction of the elaborate buildings now possessed by the Christians would appear to the pagans, who knew only the externals of Christianity, to signify the end of the Christian religion. The next provision was that the books of Holy Scripture were to be burnt. This was a new feature peculiar to Diocletian's edict, by means of which he hoped to render public worship and the instruction both of the faithful and of catechumens impossible. He may have been sufficiently subtle to fancy that by destroying the authoritative records of the Christians he would foster divisions and sects among them. What he did succeed in doing by this measure was to bring into existence the *"traditor,"* the one who was guilty of giving up the Scriptures to the officers of the State. Thus he paved the way for the schism of the Donatists which was destined to claim the attention of Constantine some years later. Christians of official position were deprived of their dignities and left with no civil rights. They could no longer appear in a court of justice to accuse another of theft or adultery, or to seek restitution for any injustice they might have suffered. They might be tortured, assaulted, robbed or have their wives defiled without any possibility of redress. Those of the Christians who were not officers of the State and the "members of Caesar's household," should they persist in professing Christianity, were to be reduced to the status of slaves. Diocletian then, true to his character and outlook as far as we are able to know them, sought to follow principles that had been laid down by his predecessors, adding but one new provision, the seizure and burning of the Sacred Books. The fact is once more asserted in specific terms that Christianity is not a lawful religion; but no death penalty is provided, there is as yet no special attack on the clergy, and all is to be done without the shedding of blood.

The edict was immediately torn down by a man of Nicomedia uttering the taunt: "More victories over Goths and

Sarmatians!" This man has been popularly identified with St. George, the Patron of England, but his name appears to have been Euethius. After being tortured, he was burned to death, on the charge, not of Christianity, but of treason. The events that followed have been associated with the alleged discovery by Galerius of a plot to deprive him of the succession. Galerius assuredly could not be satisfied with the mere levelling of churches and burning of Bibles. It was necessary for him to find some more cogent argument by which he might induce Diocletian to adopt more drastic measures.

A fire broke out in the palace. Lactantius says that it was contrived by private emissaries of Galerius. The blame, however, was attributed to the Christians within the palace, who, it was said, were anxious to destroy both Diocletian and Galerius. The slaves of Diocletian were subjected to torture in the hope that they would confess their complicity in the suspected plot, but without result. Lactantius says that no amount of torture could induce any of Diocletian's domestic slaves to admit any share in such a plot, while the attendants of Galerius were not tortured. After a fortnight a second fire occurred. Galerius now fled from the city, protesting that he must avoid the danger of being burnt alive. By this means he succeeded in convincing his father-in-law that the Christians were guilty.

Diocletian now initiated a rigorous persecution within his own household. He compelled his wife and daughter to sacrifice. His Christian chamberlains were put to death. At this juncture disorders arose both in Syria and in Melitene. At Seleucia, the port of Antioch, five hundred workmen threatened the life of their captain, Probus, but offered to release him if he would proclaim himself an independent ruler. This absurd episode was soon brought to an end by the citizens of Antioch, but Diocletian resorted to vigorous measures against both towns, and had all their chief officers put to death. The rising in Melitene was also very much of a farce, and in neither incident was there the slightest evidence to implicate any Christians. Diocletian, however, associated these disturbances with the Christians because they occurred simultaneously with the arrival of the news of the outbreak of the persecution, and feared that the kingdom of Armenia, which had now become Christian, might rally to their support. He was induced to put forth a second edict, probably in March, 303. This edict was aimed, like that of Valerian, primarily at the clergy, but with the important difference that Diocletian's edict substituted imprisonment for the death penalty. He had seen Tertullian's assertion, that the blood of Christians is seed, proved beyond dispute; and he also realized that the veneration of the relics of the martyrs was a fruitful source of conversions to Christianity. His aim, therefore, was to avoid the shedding of blood and to secure hostages rather than martyrs.

It is obviously impossible to determine, on the basis of the evidence now available, what the cause of the second fire in the palace at Nicomedia was. The first fire was probably accidental. It does seem unlikely, however, that the Christians had any part in it. It would have been quite as much a violation of sound policy as of Christian moral principles. Lactantius and Constantine do not agree in their accounts of the origin of the second fire; the former assigning it to a plot of Galerius, the latter to lightning. Galerius himself said that it was arson and that the Christians were responsible. It is quite probable that in this instance Lactantius was recording the rumor which was current in Nicomedia at the time, while Constantine's evidence is probably worthless, since, if lightning had been the cause, it would have been generally known. Certainly the Christians had great provocation and it was inevitable that they should fall under suspicion, but, when we consider the situation of Galerius, as well as his character and his hatred for the Christians, the weight of evidence inclines strongly towards his guilt.

Galerius would be satisfied with nothing less than the complete extermination of the Christians. The very fact that for a fortnight after the first fire no persecuting edict was issued makes it quite clear that the torture of the whole of Diocletian's household elicited no evidence that was sufficient to prove the guilt of the Christians in the eyes of Diocletian. At the same time it is difficult to explain the failure to apply a similar test to the servants of Galerius. The hasty departure of Galerius is also suspicious. He evidently relied on his dramatic departure to complete the effect already produced by his persuasive arguments. If the first fire was accidental, it may have suggested to Galerius the method that he might employ through his retainers to strike terror into Diocletian and thus force the proclamation of the general persecution which he so ardently desired.

These edicts were sent to Maximian and Constantius in the West. Under the former we hear of forty-nine martyrs, including the priest Saturninus, in Africa, who perished for the crime of assembling for worship. In Spain, which was now under Maximian, we know of the martyrdom of St. Vincent, the deacon of Caesaraugusta (Saragossa) and of the confessorship of Hosius of Cordova, who was later to be so intimately associated with Constantine. The natural cruelty of Maximian was responsible for the more rigorous execution of these edicts in his dominions and the number of executions quite certainly greatly exceeded those mentioned. In Gaul and Britain, which were under the Caesar Constantius, we hear of no martyrs, unless it be that St. Alban suffered in Britain at this time. Constantius was, by all reports, a mild man, beloved by the people of Gaul, one who always showed marked consideration for others. Lactantius relates that, while he permitted the destruction of churches, "mere walls which can be built up again," he preserved entire the true temple of God, the human body. Eusebius says that he ignored completely the injunctions of the edicts and showed distinct favor towards the Christians. He seems to have had numerous adherents of the persecuted religion in his own household and apparently was content to observe only the letter of the law and to avoid when possible doing even that. Apparently he did not obey the injunctions with regard to the Sacred Books, for the Donatists at a later date besought his son Constantine that they might be tried before Gallic bishops, since the bishops in Gaul had never been tempted to become *traditors*.

In the East, under Diocletian and Galerius, these edicts were unaccountably delayed in execution. Bassus, the President of Thrace, was inclined to be lenient because of the influence of his Christian wife. Philip, the Bishop of Heraclea, and his deacon were at first only imprisoned. Later, under a less lenient judge, they were burnt. The death penalty, although distinctly contrary to Diocletian's intent, evidently became quite usual in the domains of Galerius. In some instances sacred vessels were given up, but not the Sacred Books. In Thessalonica the three sisters, Agape, Chionia and Irene, were condemned for hiding the Scriptures. Their legend provided the plot for the most delightful of the Latin plays of Hroswitha, the nun of Gandersheim, in the tenth century. Some judges kept small altars in the law-courts at which all litigants were required to offer sacrifice before they could obtain justice. Torture and mutilation soon became a regular part of the program of persecution. Romanus, who was mutilated in 303, had already spent a long time in a dungeon at the time of Diocletian's Vicennalia.

The Vicennalia, or celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Emperor's proclamation, was marked by the promulgation of a third edict in December 303. It required the clergy to sacrifice and definitely provided for the use of torture, as an act of mercy, to induce them to obey. The prison doors were now thrown open, as Diocletian apparently believed that the crisis was past. To this proclamation there was added a final clause which stated that this amnesty applied even to the clergy of the Church if they would sacrifice. If not, any kind of torture might be used to persuade them. Diocletian had learned from his study of the persecutions of the past that the exile of bishops was not effective, for they had contrived to keep in touch with their flocks. He had thought that imprisonment might achieve better results, as it would prevent the spread of rebellion among the Christians. Now since this danger was apparently over, he was quite ready for the restoration of bishops to their churches, if they would but conform with the law requiring them to sacrifice, and would recognize the fact that Christianity was definitely not lawful. He was still determined not to put anyone to death. The public maintenance of bishops and other clergy in prisons had added greatly to the expense of an already overburdened treasury. It was inconceivable that all Christians would not be glad to accept release from prison on these terms, but, should some prove recalcitrant, the magistrates were to make certain that the invitation to sacrifice was accepted by adding the further inducement of torture.

Eusebius says that the prisons were immediately emptied. In some instances governors, who were not unfriendly to the Christians, attempted to make the way easy by not actually requiring sacrifice on the part of those who were released. There were, however, those who refused to leave their prisons under such conditions. Hosius of Cordova remained in prison for a long period and Donatus, to whom Lactantius dedicated his book *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, was six years incarcerated and nine times submitted to torture before the reversal by Galerius of his policy finally set him free. There were, however, probably numerous individual Christians who took advantage of the subterfuge offered them and were certified as having offered sacrifice, although they had not done so.

Before the actual publication of this third edict Diocletian suffered a mental collapse and the fourth edict was in no true sense his, but was rather the work of Maximian alone. This fourth edict extended the requirement of sacrifice to the laity and thus not only instigated a general persecution but constituted a definite reversal of Diocletian's measures. It resulted chiefly in arousing a zeal among the Christians which apparently in some cases approached fanaticism. Euplius at Catania in Sicily seems to have courted death by his own imprudent and defiant acts. The figure of the child martyr, Eulalia, of Emerita in Spain, is a very appealing one, and it is to be hoped that Prudentius in his *Peristephanon* is exaggerating when he relates:

> "Never a word the martyr spoke
> but roared aloud for wrath,
> and even as the tyrant sat
> right in his eyes Eulalia spat
> next scattered all the idols round,
> and flung the censers on the ground,
> and spurned them from her path."

However we do know that the Council of Elvira decreed that "if any one shall have destroyed idols and been slain on the spot . . . he be not included among the martyrs." In all ages the Church has found it necessary to curb the intemperate zeal of those who, through fanaticism, have asked for martyrdom for themselves and, among the people of fiery temperament who lived in North Africa and some of the provinces of the East, this restraint was particularly needed both at this time and also during the later stages of the persecution. Maximian and Galerius, who had now a free hand, took revenge on this excessive zeal by a dastardly attack upon Christian chastity.

In the autumn of 303 Diocletian and Maximian had gone to Rome to celebrate Diocletian's Vicennalia. The Emperor was now in failing health and this condition was aggravated by the prolonged games and spectacles. He seems to have arrived in Rome only a few days before the great day of the celebration. Vopiscus records a remark of Diocletian that must have been made at this time with regard to the games and ceremonies that marked the celebration. "I am censor," he is reported to have said, "the games should be more chaste when the censor is watching them." On New Year's Day he was to have been installed in his ninth consulship, but in his state of weakness and nervousness, he apparently so dreaded the demands that the ceremonies would make on him that he left suddenly and proceeded in all haste to Ravenna. There his illness became more serious, and he finished his journey in a litter. He made his way along the bank of the Danube and finally reached Nicomedia, where he dedicated the circus which commemorated the completion of twenty years of his reign. Throughout the whole of the year 304 he was both physically and mentally inactive. At one time reports of his death were current. When he later appeared in public he was wasted almost beyond recognition and he never fully recovered his normal strength. Periods of insanity alternated with others in which he seems to have been mentally sound.

At this juncture Galerius arrived at Nicomedia to compel Diocletian to abdicate. Diocletian probably did not contemplate resigning his office after twenty years, as has been sometimes suggested, but Galerius had plans of his own and had more and more dominated Diocletian for the past five years. He had probably also used threats to impose his will on Maximian. Lactantius relates in full the conversation in which he persuaded Diocletian to abdicate without delay, but one cannot but wonder how Lactantius had access to the secret discussions of the Augustus and his Caesar. The tale as related by Lactantius goes on to recount how Galerius persuaded Diocletian, who apparently still had some thought of establishing an hereditary succession in accordance with his original plans, to abandon this principle once and for all. The conversation as reported by Lactantius is exceedingly plausible. Diocletian evidently hesitated to apply the hereditary principle because of the unfitness of Maxentius, the son of Maximian, who had already married Galerius' daughter. Constantine, the son of Constantius Chlorus, was betrothed to Fausta, the daughter of Maximian. Thus each was qualified, both by descent and by marriage, to become a Caesar. But Galerius, who was determined that, on the abdication of the present Augusti, there should be two Caesars of his own choice, evidently had exerted an increasing influence over both Diocletian and Maximian—perhaps through threats of what his army, which had won distinguished success against the Persians, might do. He was able to impose his will not only on Diocletian, whose determination had been shattered by ill health, but on Maximian as well, who was thus compelled to pass over the claims of his own son.

The conversation between Diocletian and Galerius, as reported by Lactantius, is as follows:

"What is to be done?" asked Galerius, "for Maxentius does not deserve the office. While still a private citizen he has treated me with contempt; how will he act when he has acquired power?"

"But Constantine is amiable and will rule after us in such a manner as to surpass the mild virtues of his father."

"Let it be so," replied Galerius, "if my wishes and my judgment are to be disregarded. Men should be appointed who are at my disposal, who will fear me and never do anything except by my orders."

"Whom then shall we appoint?"

"Severus."

"What! That dancer, that habitual drunkard, who turns night into day and day into night?"

"He deserves the office, for he has shown himself a dependable paymaster and purveyor of the army; indeed I have already sent him to receive the purple from the hands of Maximian."

"Well, I consent; but whom else do you suggest?"

"Him," said Galerius, indicating Daia, a young man who was half barbarian. Now Galerius had recently bestowed half of his own name on that youth, and called him Maximin, just as Diocletian had formerly bestowed the name of Maximian on Galerius, because of the omen, since Maximian Herculius had served him with unshaken fidelity.

"Who is this that you present?" asked Diocletian.

"A kinsman of mine."

"Alas," said Diocletian, heaving a heavy sigh, "you do not propose men who are fit for the charge of public affairs."

"I have tried them."

"Then do you see to it, since you are about to assume the charge of the Empire: as for me, so long as I continued as Emperor, I labored long and diligently to provide for the security of the common weal, and now, if anything disastrous should ensue, the blame will not be mine."

On May 1, 305, Diocletian and Galerius went in procession to make solemn proclamation in the presence of the soldiers at Nicomedia. Diocletian abdicated his office and handed over the purple to Galerius. He announced at the same time the new Caesars who were to succeed Constantius and Galerius—Flavius Valerius Severus and Galerius' nephew Daia, who assumed the name of Galerius Valerius Maximinus. Among those who were standing near the elevated spot about three miles outside Nicomedia, where the ceremony took place, was the future emperor Constantine, the son, by an obscure marriage, of the newly proclaimed Augustus of the West, Constantius Chlorus. We cannot know what thoughts passed through the mind of the young Constantine as he heard the announcement and realized that his own claims had been passed over in favor of the candidate of Galerius, but Lactantius tells us of the disappointment of the assembled multitude and of their confusion as they learned what was taking place. On the same day at Milan Maximian resigned in favor of Constantius Chlorus and inducted Severus as Caesar. Discretion might prompt the two sons of Augusti, whose claims had been thus disregarded, to maintain silence for the present. It should be obvious that their natural ambitions would be whetted by the consciousness of the injustice they had suffered, and that ere long their resentment would become articulate.

Diocletian stepped down once more the simple Diocles and drove back through the streets of Nicomedia to begin his journey to the palace on the Dalmatian coast which he had built for the days of his retirement. Maximian also retired into private life and made his way to his villa in Lucania. There was, however, a vast difference between the two retiring Augusti. Diocletian, utterly wearied by his years of exertion and wasted by sickness, was quite ready to relinquish the office he had once coveted and to seek rest in the palace and gardens he had made ready near the place of his birth. Maximian, on the other hand, retired quite against his will and would never cease restlessly agitating to recover the power he had so reluctantly abandoned.

Eutropius, whose judgments regarding the emperors who lived near to his own time are both concise and fair, says that Diocletian was "a man of keen nature, of a wise and very subtle genius, who was willing to satisfy his own severity at the expense of the ill-will of others. Yet he was a skillful prince and was the first to introduce into the Roman Empire the outward forms of royal usage in place of those that belonged to Roman liberty. . . . He commanded the worship of his own person, although all the emperors before him were accustomed to receiving only the ordinary greeting. He adorned his clothing and shoes with precious stones. Before him the purple cloak had been the only distinguishing mark of the emperor's attire, who, in all other respects, wore only the ordinary dress."

Just what had Diocletian accomplished? He had encountered at the beginning of his reign the overwhelming problems which had been developing in the later years of the third century. He devoted his entire reign to trying to solve these problems, not by the introduction of new principles, but by attempting to renovate and restore the old order on the basis of the experience of the third century. One problem which was of paramount importance we have postponed for consideration until after the account of his reign. This was the pressing problem of finance. In approaching it Diocletian was hampered by his peculiar point of view and his natural limitations. For all his predilection for problems of state, Diocletian's point of view was typical of his army background and was limited by his familiarity with rural rather than urban conditions.

For some time before the beginning of Diocletian's reign there had been a sharp decline in prosperity, particularly evident in the life of the towns, which had played so important a part in earlier times. The bureaucratic system of administration, combined with the greatly increased taxes that were needed for the support of the vastly enlarged armies, brought heavy pressure on the middle classes in the towns. For some time before the beginning of Diocletian's reign municipal governments had become strictly oligarchical and the rank and file of citizens had relinquished their legislative and electoral burdens in favor of the members of the local senate, who had important legal and social rights. For want of direct taxes the financial burdens had come to rest more and more heavily on the rich citizens who were able to make voluntary contributions, but who were expected as well to make involuntary contributions that went under the name of *munera*. The inevitable result of these requirements was a serious dearth of candidates for office, for men naturally sought to avoid having to pay *munera*. Diocletian tried earnestly to revive the life of the city governments and in some instances rebuilt places that had fallen into decay or been destroyed. The decline in civic life and civic spirit had, however, reached the point where even freedmen had become members of the local senates, if they were able to assume the financial burdens. Civic offices had become so costly as to result in the utter breakdown of the old system of city government. The extravagances of the early years of Diocletian's reign, the military expansion, and the vast program of elaborate buildings and highway construction led to his attempt to revive the *munera,* with the result that all who could possibly do so sought by every conceivable means to escape the responsibilities of civic office. Soon members of the class of *curiales* would be forbidden to escape their obligations by entering the army. Less and less was the individual encouraged or trained to take an interest in political life as more and more he became merely an instrument to help bear the financial burdens of the State.

In imitating the example of Carausius and attempting to create a stable currency, Diocletian probably accentuated the financial crisis which he was attempting to relieve, for the result was that the coins with which the market was flooded during the preceding reigns lost their value. Probably as the news travelled through the Empire that the current coins were being devaluated by the appearance of sound currency, a tremendous impetus was given to buying whatever could be had with the old coins, and this resulted in a tremendous rise of prices. This led to the issuing in 303 of the edict on maximum prices to be applied uniformly throughout the Empire. This measure was never fully successful, was all but impossible to enforce, and produced evil effects for the future. The new system of taxation which Diocletian introduced was based on the peasant economy with which he was familiar. It took as units the *iugum* and the *caput,* the former indicating the amount of land (larger or smaller according to its quality) which was regarded as sufficient to maintain one able-bodied peasant; the latter indicated the individual who lived on the land. The *annona* (the amount of grain, wine, meat, oil and salt necessary for a soldier for one year), which had been an extraordinary tax for the support of the army in the past, now became a regular tax in all parts of the Empire. It was still imposed by indiction, but an indiction was declared every year. An officer might be paid several *annonae* according to his rank. Thus payment in kind to a great extent superseded payment in coin, while, despite the issuing of some real gold and silver coins, trade and credit continued to decline. Lactantius says that it was "as expensive to live as to die." In the attempt to stabilize by force the dislocated economic conditions, many expedients were tried. Soldiers who were quartered on public land were forbidden to leave the imperial estates on which they had been settled. The poorer landholders, who could not maintain themselves on their holdings, were required to give themselves over to the protection of the richer landholders. Craftsmen were permanently fixed in their particular craft. But probably the most disastrous of any of the measures introduced in the effort to revive the tottering finances was the establishing of a maximum wage law and a scale of maximum prices. The beginnings of serfdom and of the worst features of feudalism can be seen already appearing.

Diocletian's attempt to unify the Empire and to give stability to the imperial office by the creation of the tetrarchy was destined to give rise to a series of conflicts in his own lifetime, and to produce civil strife that would continue throughout the lives of the sons of Constantine. His ill-advised economic reforms caused the coinage to continue to be debased while the trade routes were infested by brigands. His attempts to exterminate or to render ineffective the Church of Christ brought him anxiety and sorrow in his later days as he saw his bloodless methods of persecution abandoned by his successors. Ere long this persecution opened the way for the dominant place that Christianity was later to occupy in the Empire.

The palace which the modern tourist visits at Spalato (Palatium), which Diocletian built as a place of retreat for the days of his retirement, gives one, in a real sense, a picture of the man himself; of his aims, and their results. For its erection he employed Syrian workmen, and for its model evidently chose a palace at Antioch built by Gallienus. In these facts we see both his concentration on the East and his artistic appreciation. As befitted a soldier-despot, the palace was built in the form of a Roman camp, embodying the two ideas of militarism and centralization, which were uppermost in his own ideals for the Empire. It contained originally four main sections with two intersecting avenues, each of which ended in a gate flanked by octagonal towers. In the double parallel apartments, which embody the idea of the separation of the sexes, as well as in various other architectural features, the palace illustrates the tendency of the emperors of the third century to transfer the center of gravity in the Empire to the East. In this palace we see one of the earliest examples of the use of free-standing arcades resting on columns, which, probably an importation from Syria or Asia Minor, has become a characteristic feature of the arcaded streets of many a town in northern Italy. The size of the palace can best be estimated from the fact that a mediaeval city was built within its walls, although the modern city of Spalato has expanded for a short distance outside them. The most distinctive feature of the entire edifice, the mausoleum, with its perfectly preserved central dome, survives as the Cathedral church of modern Spalato. Each day the Mass of the Christians, whom he hoped to suppress, is celebrated in the most precious part of the palace which was built to enshrine the porphyry sarcophagus of their last great persecutor.

Chapter IV

THE YOUNG CONSTANTINE

We have had our first glimpse of Constantine at the elevated place outside Nicomedia where a pillar surmounted by a statue of Jupiter had been set up for the ceremonies that marked the abdication of Diocletian. There he heard Diocletian's farewell speech and the announcement that his own father Constantius had succeeded Maximian, who also had resigned his office. He saw Galerius invest Maximin Daia with the purple and listened to the announcement that Severus, the candidate chosen by Galerius, was to be his father's Caesar, while he and the son of Maximian had been ignored. Whatever his thoughts on this occasion—and we may be certain that a young man of ambition and spirit must have felt some resentment and must have regarded himself as having been dealt with unjustly—the realization must have come to him at once that the court of Galerius was no place for him.

Of Constantine's early years we know almost nothing. Even the date of his birth cannot be established with certitude. It undoubtedly took place between 274 and 280. The earlier date is probably more nearly the correct one. The place of his birth is also uncertain, but it probably was at Naissus in Moesia (Nisch in Jugo-Slavia). Two little words uttered by one of his Panegyrists stated that Constantine had bestowed brilliance on Britain *"illic oriundo,"* "by springing thence." But these words unquestionably referred to his succeeding his father there, not to his birth. They were sufficient, however, to give rise to the legend of his birth in Britain, which acquired tremendous vitality and was still operative as a basis for the claims to precedence made by the English clergy who attended the Councils of Constance and Basle in the fifteenth century.

His father, Constantius, was not yet a Caesar when Constantine was born, but was a man who had already made his mark and was on the road to the position which he later occupied. We have already seen Constantius as a distinguished soldier who won difficult victories in Gaul and in Britain, and have observed that, in the eyes of all those whose testimony has come down to us, he was a man of far higher type and of finer sensibilities than were the three with whom he was associated in the Empire. He seems to have been renowned for his humanity and gentleness. All the stories that are told of him indicate one who cared little for display and who had great sympathy for his people. The story is told that Diocletian, who always had on hand a large gold reserve, urged his colleagues to do likewise. Constantius complied by calling for voluntary contributions which, as soon as the inspectors had departed, he proceeded to return to the donors. Eusebius, however, is probably induced by his devotion to Constantine to exaggerate, when he states that Constantius so favored the Christians as to feign idolatry himself and then to drive from his palace those who offered sacrifice and to retain only the Christians. It is scarcely credible that his palace should have been so pervaded by the atmosphere of Christianity as to be indistinguishable from a church, and that he should have committed all the posts of responsibility into Christian hands. We shall probably be nearer the truth if we assert that he was considerate towards his subjects, averse to the gross rites that were characteristic of some of the heathen ceremonies, appreciative of the high principles and loyalty of the Christians who were about him, and that he was a thoughtful man who had arrived at some simple form of monotheism, which may not have differed greatly from the worship of the Sun-god which Aurelian had sought to introduce. Eutropius sums up his character well when he says that he was "a man of distinction and of outstanding urbanity, one who was eager to maintain the prosperity of provincials and not eager to press the demands of the *fiscus* (the Emperor's private treasury), one who said that it was better that wealth should be held by private individuals than concentrated in a single purse, and of so modest a manner of living that on festal occasions, if it were necessary for him to entertain a large number of friends at a banquet, his table was spread with silver plate that had been called for from door to door among private citizens."

Of Constantine's mother we know little save that her name was Helena, and that she was a woman of lowly rank from Drepanum in Bithynia. She appears to have been the daughter of an inn-keeper or the serving-maid at an inn. Undoubtedly she held the legal status of *concubina,* or morganatic wife, to Constantius. Had Constantine been born out of wedlock there would have been no need for Constantius to divorce Helena before marrying Theodora, the step-daughter of Maximian. The position of a *concubina* was regarded by Roman standards as quite moral. It merely indicated that the wife who held such a position was of a lower social rank than her husband. Two persons who, because of the disparity in their social position, could not legally marry might, with full social approval, enter into this relationship and such unions were quite as likely to prove permanent and to be marked by mutual loyalty as were the strictly legal marriages. It appears that the Church did not generally sanction such unions, but Hippolytus criticizes Pope Callistus early in the third century for approving and authorizing the blessing of the Church for

Christian maidens whom he is reported to have advised to unite themselves with a worthy Christian freedman or slave rather than with a heathen of their own rank. It is probable that the Pope was making a clear distinction between civil and ecclesiastical marriage and that this provided the rigorist Hippolytus with an opportunity to misrepresent and harshly criticize the Pope whom he constantly maligned.

In the absence of definite material regarding Helena, the creators of legend have been unduly active. A fourteenth-century German romance relates the most colorful tale that is told about her. According to this story Helena, a native of Treves, made a pious pilgrimage to Rome where she was observed by the Emperor Constantius, who was charmed with her beauty. The Emperor caused her to be detained at the inn where she was staying and, after the departure of her fellow-travellers, overcame her by force. He was, however, so impressed by the sorrow that he had brought upon her by his act, that he gave her an ornament of precious stones together with a ring, which served as a sort of pledge. Helena continued to live in Rome, together with the son who was born to her, and gave it out that she was a widow whose husband had died in Gaul.

So charming and attractive was the son, Constantine, that some wily merchants carried him off to the Emperor of Greece, to whom they made the claim that he was the son of the Roman Emperor, thus winning for him the hand of the Greek Emperor's daughter. On the return journey to Rome the newly married couple were deserted by the merchants on a small island, but the princess, although Constantine confessed the deception to her, protested that she was quite content with him as her husband, however obscure might be his origin. Rescued by a passing vessel, the two young people made their way to Rome, where, by selling some of the princess' jewels, they contrived to purchase an inn and, together with Helena, set up as inn-keepers. The young Constantine displayed such charm and such prowess in military pursuits and in tournaments that the Emperor refused to believe that he could be of lowly origin. After Helena had been summoned, who at first stubbornly evaded telling the truth, the actual situation was revealed and was further established by the ring which the Emperor had given to Helena before Constantine's birth. Constantius, fully convinced, caused the wily merchants to be put to death and their property delivered to Constantine. He then made a treaty with the Emperor of the East, by the terms of which Constantine was recognized as his heir.

One can scarcely imagine a legend more extravagant, yet the erroneous tradition of Constantine's birth in England gave rise to tales quite as startling. A story which is found in various mediaeval chroniclers in England can be read in its most familiar version in the *Histories of the Kings of Britain* of Geoffrey of Monmouth in these words:

"Meanwhile Coel, Duke of Kaercolvin, that is Colchester, raised an insurrection against King Asclepiodotus, and after slaying him in a pitched battle, did set the crown of the kingdom upon his head. When the tidings thereof were announced at Rome, the Senate rejoiced greatly over the death of the King, who had throughout been so sore a trouble unto the Roman power. Calling to mind withal the disaster they had suffered in the loss of the kingdom, they sent as legate Constantius the senator, who had subdued Spain unto their dominion, a wise man and a hardy, who had wrought more than any other to magnify the power of the commonweal. Now Coel, Duke of the Britons, when he was aware that Constantius was arrived, durst not venture to do battle against him for that he had heard tell that no King might make stand against him. Accordingly, so soon as Constantius set foot within the island Coel sent messengers unto him, and besought him of peace, promising fealty and homage on condition that he might possess the kingdom of Britain and pay naught beyond the wonted tribute unto the Roman sovereignty. This message delivered, Constantius thereunto agreed, and peace was duly confirmed by the giving of hostages. A month afterward Coel was overtaken of a right grievous malady, whereof within eight days he died. After his death Constantius took unto himself the crown of the kingdom and therewithal the daughter of Coel unto wife. Her name was Helena, and all the damsels of the kingdom did she surpass in beauty, nor was none other anywhere to be found that was held more cunning of skill in instruments of music nor better learned in the liberal arts. None other issue had her father to succeed him on the throne of the kingdom, wherefore he made it his special care that she should be so instructed as that she might the more easily take in hand the government of the realm after her father's death. And after that Constantius had taken her as his queen, she bare unto him a son, and called his name Constantine. Sithence at that time, eleven years had passed away, when Constantius died at York and bequeathed the kingdom to his son. Who, when he was raised to the honours of the throne, within a few years did begin to manifest passing great prowess, showing the fierceness of a lion in maintaining justice among his people, restraining the ravening of robbers, and treading underfoot the cruelties of them that did use oppression, being resolved that everywhere his peace should be made new and firmly established."

This tale gives Constantine a descent of far more widely recognized distinction than did the claim of his father's descent from the Emperor Claudius Gothicus, since Duke Coel, later King Coel, is, without question, to be identified with that universally known sovereign so greatly beloved by children, and Constantine would, therefore, be the grandson of that same elderly and jovial monarch who, on a well-remembered occasion, called for his pipe, bowl, and fiddlers three.

By the time of Hakluyt Helena has acquired fame for still more amazing achievements, since she has now become distinguished as a theologian. In his *Voyages*, in addition to the material found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Hakluyt adds:

"There are some writers which doe affirme that persecution ceased and peace was granted to the Christian Churches by her good meanes.

"After the light and knowledge of the Gospel, she grewe so skilful in divinitie, that shee wrote and composed divers bookes, and certaine Greeke verses also, which (as Ponticus reporteth) are yet extant."

He also reports that "her body is to this day very carefully preserved at Venice."

One can barely recognize in these tales the Helena whom St. Ambrose reports to have been a *stabularia,* which might indicate the proprietress or a servant at an inn of a low order. Indeed Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, fell into great disfavor with Constantine because he was reported to the Emperor as having made insulting remarks on the lowly origin of the Emperor's mother. The numerous churches in England dedicated in honor of St. Helena, however, bear witness to the legends that associate her with the land that she never saw.

The true Helena was unquestionably of lowly origin, but she must also have been a woman of real strength of character. The marks of devotion to her displayed by her son throughout her life are sufficient evidence of the filial respect and affectionate regard which he felt towards her. After her conversion to the Christian religion she had a great devotion to the martyr Lucian of Antioch, in whose honor she built a magnificent basilica. Despite the attempts of modern historians to cast discredit on the name of Helena, all evidence points to her having been, however lowly her origin, a woman deserving of honor, and one who was deeply loved because of her munificence and her charities.

To what race then are we to say that Constantine belonged? He has been called a Dacian, Illyrian, Moesian. His father seems to have come from one of the leading families of Moesia or Dardania, the country north of Macedonia, while his mother was evidently from Bithynia in Asia Minor. He obviously belonged by birth and tradition to the Eastern half of the Empire. To which particular province he was most closely attached is a question of small importance. He probably spent his early years with his mother at Drepanum, near Nicomedia, or at Naissus, the place of his birth. We know that his father served in the campaigns that preceded the accession of Diocletian in 284, but Constantine was too young at that time to have seen much of his father, although, if he and his mother continued to live at or near Naissus, where he was born, the contact between father and son may have continued for a time. When Constantius Chlorus was governor of Dalmatia he may have had his son with him, for thus his greater familiarity with Latin rather than with Greek in later years would be explained. Probably he received but little in the way of formal education. He must still have been quite young when his father was required to repudiate Helena in order to marry Theodora, Maximian's step-daughter.

Not much later Constantine was at the court of Diocletian at Nicomedia, ostensibly to be educated—perhaps to be groomed as his father's successor—but certainly as a hostage for the good behavior of his father. We first hear of him when he accompanied Diocletian as he passed through Palestine on his way to Egypt to subdue the usurper L. Domitius Domitianus in 296. It was Eusebius, who was later to be the Bishop of Caesarea and the writer of the Life of Constantine, who saw the future emperor then for the first time and described the profound impression made on him by this youth of incomparable grace and beauty of person who not only exceeded in stature all those among whom he was seen, but so surpassed them in physical strength as to fill them with fear. His intellectual qualities, his self-control, and his learning also deeply impressed his future biographer and admirer. The young Constantine is described as standing on the right of the Emperor attracting the gaze of all beholders who immediately recognized in him the qualities that indicated one born to rule. Unquestionably the recollections of the bishop after a long period of years have taken on added glamor from the achievements of Constantine the Emperor. It is hardly probable that he inspired fear in Diocletian at this early age; had he done so it is unlikely that Diocletian would have promoted him to be a tribune of the first rank.

It was during Constantine's stay at the court of Diocletian that he contracted an alliance with Minervina, a morganatic marriage like the first marriage of his father, the fruit of which was a son, Crispus. He appears also to have seen service with Galerius in Persia. He evidently won a reputation for bravery and for military ability. There are tales that come to us from these days that seem scarcely credible. It is related that when, as a young man, he was serving in the cavalry against the Sarmatians, he seized by the hair and carried off a fierce savage, whom he threw down at the feet of Galerius. There is also a story of how, when sent through a swamp by Galerius, he made his way through it on his horse, opening it up for the rest of the troops to attack the Sarmatians, of whom he slew large numbers, thus winning the victory for Galerius. Still more improbable are the tales of how Galerius plotted secretly against Constantine's life, not daring to resort to open violence because of his fear of the army, with which Constantine was exceedingly popular. He is said to have required Constantine to fight with wild beasts, calling it an essential form of manly exercise. Had his fear or distrust of Constantine reached such a pitch it is more than likely that he would have been able to find a satisfactory method for putting him out of the way. There is no doubt, however, that it was the hostile attitude of Galerius that was responsible for Diocletian's passing over his natural claims for advancement, for his father had shown loyalty, ability and an excellent record of achievement. As early as 293 Constantine had been betrothed to Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, and coins had already appeared at Alexandria with the inscription, CONSTANTINUS CAESAR. It may be that Diocletian intended to hold Constantine in reserve to succeed his father, but it is most likely that Galerius was jealous of the success of Constantius in recovering Britain and saw the possibility of a serious rival in Constantine, who had already shown such marked ability, was so popular with the soldiers, and had a natural ambition to be a leader. The prejudiced pagan writer Zosimus says that Constantine had been previously ambitious to become emperor, but that after the choice of Severus and Maximin Daia he was inflamed to a still greater degree with that desire. It is but to be expected that a man of approximately thirty years, who had shown marked ability, whose father was now Senior Augustus and had rendered signal service in restoring an important province to the Empire, should have ambitions. Had he been without them, posterity would certainly regard him as pusillanimous and unworthy of his distinguished father.

The years that Constantine spent at Nicomedia were useful to the young hostage in the observations that he was able to make and in the experiences that he would be able to turn to good account at a later time when he came to exercise authority. He saw Christians in the part of the Empire where they were more numerous and was able to form a judgment of them as they occupied high positions. He undoubtedly found friends among them and, while still remaining a pagan himself, knew something of the Christian clergy and in particular of Anthimus, the highly respected bishop of Nicomedia. He was able to compare the principles of government at Diocletian's court with those that were practised by his own father. He had a distinct recollection of the palace fires at Nicomedia and of the beginning of the persecution of the Christians. These early impressions were certain to remain with him and to influence deeply his own policies when the time came for him to succeed his father.

The question naturally arises, why did Constantius allow his son to remain in the East during all these years? Why did he not have him at his side to share in the campaigns in Gaul and Britain? There was surely no question about the loyalty of Constantius. What excuse could there be for continuing to hold his son as a hostage? These questions are hard to answer, but it seems obvious that it was due largely to the powerful influence of Galerius and to his jealousy of Constantius that Constantine was required to remain in the East at a time when he could have been so useful to his father. When Galerius succeeded Diocletian as supreme ruler in Nicomedia, he undoubtedly felt that his own way would be easy, with Maxentius, the son of Maximian, forced to remain at Rome, if Constantine could be kept occupied at Nicomedia or in the provinces of the East. Here he could be very useful and, in the event of a mutiny in the army, his popularity with the soldiers might prove a real asset. But Constantine was determined to get away and join his father at all costs.

The opportunity arrived when Constantius was compelled to return to Britain to repel an invasion of the Picts. He then requested the return of his son, to which Galerius reluctantly gave his consent, while secretly planning to make the departure of Constantine as difficult as possible. The tale of Constantine's escape from Nicomedia, as related by Lactantius, is both graphic and exciting. We see Galerius signing the order which authorized the journey, while secretly planning to make it impossible for Constantine to get away. He could think of no valid excuse at the moment for longer retaining him; so, while giving him some imperial messages to be carried, he ordered him to defer his departure until the following day. He would be able during the night to mature further plans for detaining him on one pretext or another. He might even let him make a start and send orders to Severus to arrest him as he passed through his territory. Galerius dined well and slept soundly, so soundly, in fact, that he remained in his bed-chamber until noon on the following day, and then ordered Constantine to be brought into his presence. Constantine, however, had already made good his escape immediately on the retirement of Galerius after the evening meal. He is reported to have taken with him all the horses used for the public service, seizing those that he needed at each stable as he passed and causing the others, together with those that he discarded at each station, to be hamstrung. At the announcement of what had happened Galerius could scarcely refrain from tears. He sent his servants in pursuit, but finding no horses to use, they returned to him to report their helplessness.

There would appear to be a considerable element of exaggeration in this exciting tale. It seems unlikely that Galerius should not have been able to find some means to prevent the escape of Constantine had he been determined to do so. Lactantius, however, is such a master of lively narrative that it would be a distinct loss to omit his tale, which seems to be corroborated to some extent by several pagan writers. We may be certain, however, that Galerius was reluctant to let Constantine go and that Constantine lost no time in taking advantage of Galerius' lack of a plausible pretext for longer detaining him, lest he change his mind. It is also quite certain that Constantine covered at least the early stages of his journey with the utmost speed and he undoubtedly did everything in his power to make pursuit difficult. Once past the Illyrian frontier he was in the territory of Severus, who was his father's Caesar, but there was no certainty that Severus, who was the creature of Galerius, would not arrest him, if he were ordered to do so.

Constantine joined his father at Boulogne, where he was awaiting the opportunity to set sail for Britain. Constantius was already ill with the sickness that a little later caused his death. Together the father and son proceeded to Britain where they won a brilliant victory over the invaders. Then, on July 25, 306 Constantius died at York recommending his son to the soldiers and delivering into his hands the sovereign authority which he held. He also commended to his care his younger step-brothers and step-sisters, the sons and daughters of Theodora. There were three sons: Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, and Hannibalianus; and three daughters: Constantia, Anastasia, and Eutropia. The eldest of these children cannot have been more than thirteen years of age at this time. We are told by Lactantius as well as by one of the Panegyrists that Constantius died with a peaceful mind because he felt quite certain about his heir and successor.

Constantine's proclamation followed immediately on his father's death. There seems to have been no palace at York, but it was probably at the Praetorium there that Constantius died and that the proclamation of his son took place. Immediately his father's soldiers greeted him as Augustus. One of the Panegyrists says that Jupiter himself extended his right hand and welcomed Constantius among the gods. An interesting detail, that makes the proclamation of Constantine quite unique, is added by Aurelius Victor, who says that a German King, who was serving in the Roman army, was second to none in his support of the new emperor. One of the Panegyrists describes Constantine as reluctant to accept the new honor that had been thrust upon him and as spurring his horse and seeking to escape from the robe which the soldiers were attempting to throw over his shoulders, since he intended to write to the senior emperors to learn their wishes. It is more than unlikely that he would have thought of consulting Galerius' pleasure, for the answer would unquestionably be in the negative. On the contrary he wrote to Galerius to announce that he had been elevated to the position made vacant by the death of his father.

This was indeed bad news for Galerius. We are told that he delayed for a time to decide what course of action he should pursue. It was indeed bitter to have the young man whom he had insisted on passing over for appointment as Caesar announce that he had been proclaimed Augustus. Moreover one of the primary aims of the system which Diocletian had introduced was to do away once and for all with the proclamation of emperors by victorious legions. To refuse to recognize Constantine would, of course, provoke a war and that was to be avoided, if at all possible. Moreover, if Diocletian's system had any significance, Constantius Chlorus was the Senior Augustus and, as Senior Augustus, was legally entitled to appoint his own successor. While awaiting the reply of Galerius, Constantine defeated an invasion of the Franks in Gaul and by this means more definitely confirmed his position. Galerius ultimately decided to accept the inevitable. Although Lactantius tells us that when the bust of Constantine decked with laurels was brought to Galerius, his first impulse was to throw both it and the messenger who bore it into the flames, he was dissuaded from doing so by his trusted advisers, who warned him that his soldiers would transfer their loyalty to Constantine, should it come to an armed conflict between them. He consequently sent Constantine's messengers back with a purple robe, recognizing him, however, not as Augustus, but as Caesar, which was but the logical working out of Diocletian's system. It would indeed have been quite irregular for the most recently proclaimed to be given a place of priority over those who had been appointed some years earlier.

What was the appearance of this newly appointed Caesar? We know the impression he had produced a little earlier on Eusebius, or, at least what his recollection of the young Constantine was many years later when it had, no doubt, been considerably embellished by the Emperor's achievements. We know too the qualities of form and demeanor which Lactantius says endeared him to the soldiers. Although Cedrenus, a Byzantine who wrote in the eleventh century, describes him as of only moderate height, with broad shoulders and thick neck, of ruddy complexion and a somewhat curved nose and sparse hair and beard, it would seem from his figure as it appears on coins, as well as from the impression that he made generally, that he was handsome and striking in appearance, stout and broad of shoulder, aglow with vitality and physical strength at the time that he was proclaimed Emperor in Britain. The leonine brightness of his eyes, the softness and pleasant quality of his voice provoked comment. His habit of throwing back his head in such a way as to emphasize his thick neck need not have been an indication of contemptuousness, but rather a natural mannerism. His calm and gracious expression was noted also. He must have presented an appearance of vigor and have been possessed of a considerable degree of charm when he began his career as one of the rulers of the Roman Empire.

Britain under Constantius Chlorus and Constantine was probably in a happier and more prosperous state than many of the provinces of the Empire. The decline of the towns, which in most provinces were the centers of economic and cultural life as well as of civic activity, had become progressively serious since the withdrawal of imperial protection by the Severi. In Britain the efforts of Constantius Chlorus to revive the prosperity and importance of the towns had met with little success; but the development of the villas was a distinctive feature, and the villas continued to prosper well into the fourth century.

The typical villa, consisting of an isolated farm-house surrounded by a considerable tract of land, with a block of dwelling houses and farm buildings generally rectangular in shape, which enclosed the farmyard, had a distinctive architectural style and frequently housed such industries as pottery and ironmongery. It was symbolic of the independence of the yeoman of British stock, who had adopted certain Roman ways of living and who, in times of financial depression, could, by making payment in kind from the produce of his farm and its industries, still continue to prosper; while the workers on the land became more and more dependent upon him. The closing of the Spanish tin mines, with the consequent revival of the tin trade in Cornwall, also induced a period of prosperity; while the item "British woolen cloaks," included in Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices, would seem to indicate that there was a regular export trade from Britain, and that the textile industry had reached a considerable degree of development.

Probably the Roman Wall, which can be traced almost continuously from Newcastle-on-Tyne in the east to Carlisle on the west, marked the northern boundary of the country that was held by a Roman army. This army was probably not recruited from Britain, but consisted largely of Romans together with a goodly number of Germanic legionaries, while some legions recruited in Britain were serving elsewhere. It is quite certain that such legions served across the Rhine in the second century. But the legions that were quartered at Eboracum (York) seem to have been recruited to a considerable extent from the British population, which was quite numerous in these legions at the time of Constantius Chlorus. Probably about 15,000 men made up the garrison that held the wall, while the whole Roman army in Britain must have numbered about 50,000. Of the new mobile forces the enrollment probably contained no men who had been recruited locally. Septimius Severus (who also died at York, in 211), had permitted the Roman legionaries in Britain to marry and hold property and to settle in permanent quarters. Apparently many of those who had spent their best years serving in Britain, where they perhaps had wives and property, preferred to remain there after the expiration of their term of service. Kipling vividly expresses this thought, in referring to the withdrawal of 30,000 Roman soldiers from Britain a few years later.

"Legate, I come to you in tears— My cohort ordered home!
I've served in Britain forty years. What should I do in Rome?
Here is my heart, my soul, my mind—the only life I know.
I cannot leave it all behind. Command me not to go."

The island seems to have had a Roman culture all its own at this time. This is evident in the remains of the Roman city of Silchester, to be seen at the Reading museum. Roman laws, customs and military training were operative throughout the province, yet the characteristic architecture of the villa and the development of local arts and crafts make it evident that it was not a purely Roman civilization that prevailed, but one in which the native element was a constant factor. The influence of Constantius Chlorus was such as to favor the development of this element. Of religious conditions in Britain at this time we know very little. The Roman soldiers and officials, of course, maintained the official cults, but these probably had little influence on the native population, who continued their local cults which, for a long time, had no permanent temples. There seem to have been some temples erected to Jupiter, Mars, Minerva and Apollo, and, during the third and fourth centuries, the native people seem to have erected some sort of temples. The rites of Mithras (which appear to have been popular in the third century among the frontier garrisons), Sarapis, Isis, and Cybele seem to have been introduced into the province, but to have made little headway. Christianity, despite the impression created by Eusebius, probably had made but little progress, and that chiefly among the Britons, rather than the Roman population. Yet there were three known martyrs, Alban and Aaron and Julius, the latter two from Caerleon; there were undoubtedly some small church buildings; and we know also that three Bishops from Britain attended the Council of Arelate (Arles) in 314.

Eboracum or York, where Constantine began his reign, was a *colonia,* a self-governing city with its *decuriones* and its *plebs,* the former the city magistrates and senators, who were probably not, however, of Roman blood. They were the more prosperous members of the community, and, as in other parts of the Empire, were beginning to feel sorely the financial obligations that devolved on them because of their position of dignity and privilege. The museum at York has preserved no specimens of the local architecture, but it does provide likenesses of a few citizens of ancient times. There is a Gaul who was a *Sevir Augustalis,* a member of a fraternity that kept alive the memory of the great Augustus; a memorial stone which shows the recumbent figure of Julia Velva and of her heir who erected the stone, Aurelius Mercurialis, probably representatives of the wealthy governing class of British citizens; and there is also a sculptured stone of a Roman soldier. There are specimens of Gallic glass and pottery, which would indicate that here, at least, such articles were imported for the Romans or Romanized Britons. As the residence of the Caesar when he was in the province, as well as of a large standing garrison, fortified by walls and in the midst of a rich agricultural country, Eboracum was undoubtedly a prosperous city which provided its inhabitants not only with security and order, but also with a relatively high degree of civilization and culture.

It was in July, 306, that Constantine began his reign as Caesar of the West, with direct responsibility, for Gaul, Spain and Britain, and with the army of the Rhine under his command. Gaul was to be his chief concern for several years. The Gallic provinces had suffered seriously from the depredations of the Germanic tribes during the chaos of the middle of the preceding century and, driven to madness by the injuries they had suffered in previous years, the Bagaudae had revolted in 285 and had been mercilessly suppressed by Maximian. The military weakness of Rome in Gaul was evident in the fact that Maximian had seen no other possible course than the recognition of the independence of Carausius in Britain. Incursions into Gaul by the Germanic tribes across the Rhine were of frequent occurrence. Constantius had been obliged to return to Gaul almost immediately after the reconquest of Britain to repel Germanic invaders and to try to restore order in his devastated provinces. Although he had been successful and had settled some of the captured barbarians on the land to till the soil and labor under Roman or Gallic masters, yet the peace had been of short duration. When Constantius was recalled to Britain to repel the invasion of the Picts, the Franks broke their pledge and once more burst into the provinces from which they had been repelled. Such was the situation that confronted Constantine immediately after the death of his father and his own proclamation. Maximian had failed and his own father had not been able to secure tranquility in Gaul. It was more important that he should demonstrate at once his own military power and prowess than await the response of Galerius.

Constantine's victory was swift and complete. The treacherous kings, Ascarius and Regaisus, were taken captive and, together with large numbers of their tribesmen, thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheater at Treves. Such measures seem scarcely consistent with the clemency for which Constantine was extolled by his admirers throughout his whole life. His mercy towards his vanquished enemies is the constant theme of his Panegyrists. It is probably true that these kings had violated a treaty they had made with his father. They had demonstrated over a long period that an oath or a promise was not regarded as sacred in their eyes. Yet such reprisals as Constantine exacted clearly indicate another and a coarser side of his nature than that which is generally emphasized. The Panegyrist who describes this sanguinary scene emphasizes the treachery and brutality of the young captives which rendered them unsuited to serve in the army or to prove useful as slaves. At the same time he finds apparent pleasure in relating that the wild beasts were exhausted with the vast numbers that they had to devour. Constantine had succeeded in subduing the Franks, but the Rhenish border would still demand large numbers of troops and constant vigilance for a long time in the future.

Constantine may have been disappointed that Galerius saw fit to recognize him only as a Caesar, and not as Augustus. That was, however, a matter of small moment, for he must have realized that what really counted was military ability and a victorious army. He could wait for the title. In the meantime he had to his credit a significant victory. The system inaugurated by Diocletian might appear to survive for a time. He would soon receive the title he had claimed. His marriage to Fausta followed soon and from his father-in-law, Maximian, he was given full recognition and became a member of the family of the Herculii. For the present there were sufficient activities to claim his full attention. While making his headquarters at Treves, he had to move about frequently, repelling and subduing turbulent tribes, fortifying the borders, building bridges, and continuing the work of restoration of the cities which had suffered from barbarian incursions—undertakings begun by his father. During the first five years of his reign his activity seems to have been uninterrupted and always constructive. He was incidentally winning the loyalty and support of his subjects and, in particular, of the Christians, to whom he appears to have shown marked favor from the outset. He was constantly strengthening his own position and could await developments before pressing further his more extensive ambitions.

Chapter V

MAXENTIUS THE SON OF MAXIMIAN

WITH CONSTANTINE well occupied in Gaul and Severus administering Italy and Africa, Galerius, no doubt, thought that he need fear no trouble from the West for a time at least. But the popular discontent at Rome provided the opportunity and the elevation of Constantine the incentive needed to rouse to action the rather inert son of Maximian. He too had been smarting under the blow that he had received in being ignored in the appointment of the new Caesars. It was humiliating to learn that the other neglected candidate, the son of Constantius by an obscure marriage, whom he was inclined to regard as illegitimate, had now been elevated at least to the post of a Caesar, and was prosecuting with vigor his campaigns and other activities in the provinces formerly administered by his father. Still it is doubtful if he would have asserted himself, had not Rome itself offered a most inviting opportunity.

The discontent at Rome began with the Praetorian Guard and quickly spread to the populace. For a long time the people of Rome had resented the humiliation that they had experienced. Many years had passed since there had been an emperor living on the Palatine. The Senate had become a nonentity. Rome was no longer in any sense an imperial city, but was now treated like an obscure provincial town. Diocletian had visited it but once, and then in a severely critical mood. He had left the city peremptorily after reducing in numbers the Praetorian Guards, the elite and favored troops who had made and unmade emperors. The Praetorians were now little more than a local police force. No longer was Rome immune from taxation. Galerius realized the injustice of this exemption, which had served merely to flatter the pride of the city of Augustus. Now the officials had been sent to make a census of the city and to enforce the measures of taxation. Galerius proceeded to add fresh insults to the Praetorian Guard. Some of its members had already been sent away to render active service in various provinces. Now Galerius, who saw no reason to continue the Household Troops in a city where no emperor ever resided, proceeded through Severus to abolish the Praetorian camp. The few survivors were burning for vengeance on Galerius, and saw in Maxentius the tool that they needed. The Praetorian tribunes united with the tribune of the Pork Market, who was in command of the city cohorts, to concoct a plot for proclaiming Maxentius as Emperor. The mob of Rome was but too ready to join in the undertaking, and thus to take vengeance for the loss of its ancient privileges. Apparently the prefect of the city, Annius Anullinus, was in sympathy with the conspiracy, for Maxentius retained him in his post, while his vicar, Abellius, who was loyal to Galerius, appears to have been the only person killed in effecting the proclamation of Maxentius.

Thus, without any real effort, Maxentius became master of Rome. But his position was a very weak one. He was practically without an army and was only accepted by Rome and southern Italy and the nearby islands, while northern Italy remained loyal to Severus. It was, indeed, something to be proclaimed emperor in Rome, but he could not but know that he would be recognized neither by Galerius nor by Severus, who had now taken over the command of the armies of Maximian. Severus was living at Milan, and might be expected to descend upon him at any moment. He received encouragement soon, however, when the legions in Africa declared for him, and this seemed to guarantee the food supply for the city. It was necessary still to be both cautious and wily. He refrained from using the title of Augustus or Caesar, and was satisfied to revert to the ancient title of *princeps*. If he were to succeed in maintaining his position, he must also resort to corruption and thus win over the support of his father's old troops who were now serving under Severus. Constantine would be a valuable ally and he attempted to secure his support by causing coins to be struck in honor of the Augusti and the Caesars. If Maxentius recognized Constantine's claims, why should not Constantine reciprocate by recognizing his? Most fruitful of all would be the backing of his own father, if he could but induce him to resume his position and become Senior Augustus. But Maximian had expressed his disapproval of the conspiracy of the Praetorians. Maxentius, however, probably knew the susceptibilities and weaknesses of his father better than anyone else. He undoubtedly realized that Maximian was chafing under his enforced leisure and was utterly bored with the inactive life at his villa in Lucania. Never had anyone relinquished a position more reluctantly than had Maximian, never had anyone been more anxious for an opportunity to recover what he had given up so unwillingly. If Maxentius could but persuade his father to resume his office as senior Augustus and then recognize him as sharing its duties, there could be no question about the legitimacy of his position. It was a crafty move on the part of Maxentius to send to his father, with the approval of the Roman Senate, the purple insignia of the imperial office and to nominate him as Augustus for the second time. Maximian accepted his son's invitation with alacrity, although he did not at once resume the title of Augustus, and set out immediately for Rome. He also wrote to Diocletian, hoping to persuade him to lay aside his simple pleasures at his palace at Salona, and urging him to resume the power which he had laid aside and appeared to regard so lightly.

It was not long before Galerius took steps to thwart the plans of Maxentius. He ordered Severus to march straight down the Italian peninsula and attack Rome. He doubtless felt that it would be a very serious matter to permit the Praetorians to reassert the power to choose an emperor, a power which they had for so long exercised in times past. Severus proceeded without delay, only to find himself deserted by his troops when he arrived at Rome and began to lay siege to the city. Apparently it was some Moorish troops fresh from Africa who first abandoned him. This was followed by the defection of those who had formerly served under Maximian, and were unwilling to fight against his son. When Anullinus, who had been Severus' praetorian prefect, transferred his loyalty to Maxentius, and then proceeded to distribute generous gifts among the soldiers who still remained loyal to Severus, they too deserted him. Maximian had by now arrived in Rome and had resumed the title of Augustus. There was obviously but one course open to Severus, and that was to flee with his few remaining soldiers. He took refuge at Ravenna, whence he could more easily keep in touch with Galerius and, had he been able to hold out against siege for a sufficient time, Galerius might have sent him there a force of loyal troops that would have enabled him to proceed once more against Rome. Maximian, however, pursued him at full speed and at Ravenna arranged terms of surrender with him. Severus returned the purple to Maximian from whom he had received it only two years earlier, with the understanding that his life was to be spared, and returned to Rome a prisoner. Thence he was taken to a villa outside Rome on the Appian Way and held as a hostage for Galerius.

Maxentius now, in the spring of 307, seemed to be quite firmly established in his position, after a victory that had been very easily won. His next concern, for obviously Galerius would attempt to avenge the defeat of Severus, was to fortify himself further by an alliance with Constantine, who had mobilized his army on the Gallic frontier and was calmly watching the situation as it developed in Italy. If Constantine were to decide to rally to the support of Galerius, the position of Maxentius would again become precarious. Maximian, therefore, set out for Gaul to give his daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine, to whom she had been betrothed for a long time. Maximian also conferred upon Constantine the title of Augustus in return for Constantine's recognition of Maxentius as possessing the same title, which had some time since been conferred upon him by his army. Constantine had the name of Severus erased from the monuments that had been erected in his honor in Gaul, and, a little later, issued coins on which Maxentius was styled Augustus. In the meantime Maxentius had busied himself with the fortification of Rome and with preparations for defensive warfare.

In the course of the summer Galerius, with a much larger army than Severus had had, proceeded through Italy without opposition to attack Maxentius. He based his forces on Fanum Fortunae (Fano) and established his camp at Interamna (Terni) in Umbria. Had Constantine, who had no reason to feel any deep loyalty or affection for Galerius, decided to attack him from the north, Galerius' position would have been a very hazardous one. He must have learned too that Rome was not only well fortified and garrisoned, but that it was also well provisioned to withstand a siege. An embassy to his son-in-law did not bring satisfactory results, while his troops were being withdrawn from their loyalty to him by generous gifts from Maximian. To retain the loyalty of the others Galerius is reported to have thrown himself at their feet, beseeching them not to deliver him into the hands of his enemies, while at the same time promising them generous donatives. Unable to persuade Maxentius to renounce the title of Augustus, fearing an attack from Constantine on the north, realizing the difficulty of a siege of Rome with an army weakened by disaffection and many desertions, Galerius had to retreat. As he made his way back through Italy over the Via Flaminia he seems to have granted his army license to plunder at will, with the result that every vestige of discipline vanished. This would have been Maxentius' opportunity to pursue him and to win an easy victory but, whether from innate lethargy, from fear of rousing Constantine to action, or merely from a natural dislike of winning a still more humiliating victory over his father-in-law, Maxentius did nothing. Lactantius thinks that even a small body of troops might easily have cut off Galerius in his flight.

The tales that Lactantius relates about Galerius' expedition seem scarcely credible. He relates that Galerius had no idea of the size of Rome, which he had never seen, and thought of it as no larger than the towns with which he was familiar in the East. He credits him with the intention of utterly extinguishing the Senate of Rome and putting the entire population of the city to the sword. It is hard to imagine the hardened warrior as cringing and humbling himself before his own soldiers, and quite as incredible that the senior Augustus of the Empire should have set out on this expedition so utterly ignorant of Rome and its fortifications. It was unquestionably Constantine who held the power to decide the contest in favor of Maxentius or Galerius, if he decided to throw in his lot with the one or the other; and the realization of this power held by Constantine was undoubtedly the determining factor in the decision of Galerius to retreat. Why did not Constantine attack Galerius when he had so excellent an opportunity? He could have been certain of winning a decisive victory. Probably he was not yet willing to assume responsibility for throwing into disorder the whole imperial system; still less did he wish to consolidate the power of Maximin Daia in the East.

In the meantime Maximian remained at the court of Constantine in the hope of being able to influence him in whatever direction he might decide. Severus had now been put to death by Maxentius. We are told that he was given the opportunity to select the manner of his death and that he decided to have his veins opened. There are, however, conflicting accounts. Maxentius was having his own way at Rome and received the cheering news that, after the report of Galerius' defeat had reached Spain, the Spanish provinces had declared in his favor. This was clearly an infraction of the administration Constantius had bequeathed his son, and could not fail to lead to a rupture between Constantine and Maxentius. Maximian was beginning to weaken in his support of his son's usurpation after he learned that Severus had been put to death in violation of his own promise. It must have been obvious also that the defeat of Galerius had created a breach between him and Maxentius that could not be healed, and that was certain ere long to cause a serious situation throughout the Empire. Maximian is reported before this to have attempted to persuade Diocletian to resume the reins of the Empire and thus to avert the ruin which was threatening it, but Diocletian preferred to raise cabbages at Salona and not to involve himself again in the responsibilities and troubles which had proved too onerous for him. Maximian fully realized Constantine's strength and now urged him to pursue the retreating troops of Galerius and then join him in the overthrow of Maxentius. Constantine, however, was too astute to become involved in so reckless an enterprise. He was, no doubt, preparing to meet Maxentius at the proper time, but inaction was more discreet at present, for by now Galerius and Maximin Daia would have had the opportunity to consolidate their forces, and to encounter them at this juncture was not a part of his plan.

Late in the year Maximian returned to Rome with the determination to assemble his old soldiers and, with the support of the people of Rome, to remove his son from his position. It would seem that for a time a sort of joint rule of father and son was attempted, but Maximian was moved to resentment by the fact that more obedience was shown to his son than to him. Lactantius describes the father as being childishly jealous, and thoroughly impatient at being denied the exercise of uncontrolled sovereignty. Aurelius Victor says of the son that he was beloved by no one, even his father or his father-in-law, and repeats a tale of the gossips that he was the child of some Syrian and had been foisted upon Maximian by his wife as her own child. He also tells us that Maximian himself was fierce by nature, burning with lust, a man of lowly Pannonian birth, whose parents were merchants at Sirmium. The contest between such a father and such a son must have been very dramatic. Maximian summoned the assembly that he had planned, relying on the continued loyalty of his former troops. His apparent purpose was to address them about the disastrous state of public affairs. After a prolonged harangue on that subject, he stretched out his hand towards his son and accused him of being the source of all ills and the chief cause of all the misfortunes of the State. He then tore the purple robe from Maxentius' shoulders, who, thus stripped of his dignity, leaped headlong from the tribunal into the arms of the soldiers. The soldiers raised an angry clamor against the unnatural old man and drove him from the city.

The account of this incident that has come down to us may not be entirely trustworthy, but the rupture between the father and son was complete and Maximian, in the spring of 308, made his way to Gaul to take refuge with his son-in-law, Constantine, at Treves. From there he seems to have entered into negotiations with Galerius, who, after his defeat in Italy, had decided to look to the authority and influence of Diocletian to bring some sort of order out of the confused state of the Empire. The outcome was that Diocletian was nominated to the consulship of 308 together with Galerius, and was summoned to a conference to be held at Carnuntum, on the Danube, twenty-seven miles east of where Vienna now stands.

At Carnuntum Galerius, Diocletian and Maximian met, together with an old companion-in-arms of Galerius, Licinius. As the senior of them all and as the creator of the system that had now become so completely disrupted after the removal of his guiding hand, Diocletian was evidently regarded with deep respect. Every effort was made to induce him to assume once more the authority that he had resigned. This he refused to do; neither would he acquiesce in Maximian's resumption of the power that he had once laid aside. A deep antipathy had developed between Galerius and Maximian. The whole situation seemed to be a hopeless *impasse*. Diocletian alone was capable of resolving the difficulties in which they found themselves involved. Maximian was required to return to private life and all his acts since his resignation were nullified. Maxentius was declared an usurper and a public enemy. A new Augustus was chosen in the person of Licinius, and to him were assigned Italy, Spain and Africa, which were now actually under the control of Maxentius. Galerius was to continue as Augustus of the East. Maximin Daia was to remain as his Caesar, and Constantine was degraded to that status under Licinius. This was Diocletian's prescription for settling the difficulties which his well-meant plans had produced. It did seem to restore his system once more, but only at the expense of rousing the indignation both of Constantine and of Maximin Daia. They could scarcely be expected to regard with equanimity the elevation of Licinius, who had never served as a Caesar, to a position superior to their own. Probably the appointment of Licinius as Augustus of the West was made in compliance with the desire of Galerius, who realized that his own health was failing, and quite naturally wished to have at his side as the other Augustus, one who had been intimately associated with him in the past, and on whose loyalty he felt that he could rely without reserve.

Maximian's rage knew no bounds when he found himself compelled to retire once more. Lactantius says that he went to Carnuntum with the intention of murdering Galerius, but one wonders how Lactantius had such intimate knowledge of the mind of the deposed Augustus. The situation may have appeared to be settled. Outwardly the system of Diocletian seemed to have been reinstated. The six rulers of the Empire were, in theory at least, reduced to four, but the seeds of future discord had also been sown. To satisfy the angry demands of Constantine and Maximin Daia, Galerius gave them a new title—"Sons of Augustus." Constantine was apparently still on friendly terms with Diocletian. Three years later in the presence of Constantine one of the Panegyrists spoke of Diocletian in highly laudatory terms and praised the disinterested step that he took, when after being the first to share with others the rule of the Empire, he was also the first to lay it aside of his own free will. He speaks of Diocletian in his retirement as rejoicing in the deep respect shown him by Constantine and as protected by Constantine's shade, which covers him. Panegyrists were fulsome and artificial in their praises, but they did not say in the presence of those whom they were honoring things that would arouse their displeasure.

Still, even though Constantine seems to have remained on very friendly terms with Diocletian, he could not be expected to accept Licinius' advancement without protest, nor to be content with the empty title offered him by Galerius. He refused an honor that had no significance and was really a degradation. Maximin Daia expressed his protest by causing himself to be proclaimed Augustus by his troops. Galerius could see no course but to yield, and soon permitted the title of Augustus both to him and to Constantine. This marked the complete breakdown of Diocletian's system. Now, in 308, there were no fewer than seven in the Empire who bore the title of Augustus—Galerius, Maximin Daia, Licinius, Constantine, Maxentius (whose claims were not recognized, but who continued to maintain his position in Rome), as well as the two original Augusti, Maximian and Diocletian. Of these seven, Diocletian alone had really abandoned his ambition to rule.

Maxentius was undisturbed by the fact that he had been declared a public enemy by the conference at Carnuntum. He was certain of the support of the Praetorians and felt that he could not be dislodged. It mattered but little to be branded as an usurper, so long as he was in possession, not only of Rome, but also of the provinces which had been assigned to Licinius. He did certain things at Rome to ingratiate himself with the populace. Beside the Via Sacra he built a basilica of enormous proportions, with its façade with five entrances, to house the courts of justice. This basilica and the Heroon of Romulus, his son who died quite young and was deified, constitute two of the last great triumphs of Roman architecture. Even in its ruins the basilica of Maxentius is deeply impressive and, in recent summers has provided a setting unique in the world for symphonic concerts. This vast building, which was later completed and furnished with a second entrance on the Via Sacra by Constantine, was one of the most remarkable buildings ever erected at Rome. The height and span of its vaulted roof and the great thickness of its walls would be noteworthy in any period. A marble seat with steps runs round the apse, and was separated from the main hall by two columns and marble screens, thus forming a tribunal for the emperor when holding court. Of the large number of monolithic marble columns that once stood in the nave but one now remains, and it stands in the Piazza of Santa Maria Maggiore. It is obvious that Maxentius had magnificent ideas and that he must have felt a certain security of tenure, even though he had been outlawed by the other rulers of the Empire.

With regard to the Christians at Rome Maxentius seems to have exercised a considerable degree of lenity for the sake of winning their favor. Eusebius must surely be indulging in exaggeration when he states that at first Maxentius feigned to be a Christian himself, but his assertion that he commanded his subjects to cease persecuting the Christians is apparently true. Under the persecuting edicts of Diocletian Maximian was able without difficulty to effect the seizure of all the property of the Christian community at Rome. There is no record of the surrender of Sacred Books, however. Only one priest, Marcellinus, and one exorcist, Peter, are definitely known to have been put to death at this time. The Pope Marcellinus evidently died of natural causes and this gave rise to the vilification of his memory later by the Donatists, who accused him both of having been a *traditor* and of having offered incense at pagan altars. Their statements were not established by any evidence whatsoever, but there is the significant fact that his name was omitted from the calendar of the Roman Church that existed in the time of Constantine. However, St. Augustine and later Theodoret were able with certainty to assert his innocence. The Church in Rome, when the rebel and usurper Maxentius seized the rule of the city, was without a Bishop and was rent asunder with discord, because of the demands of certain apostates that, now that the persecution had ceased, they should be restored to full ecclesiastical communion at once and without the performance of any penance whatsoever. In this time of stress, even though Maxentius appeared to be kindly disposed to them, the Christians feared that he might alter his policy or that Galerius might be successful in removing him. They delayed, after the death of Marcellinus in 304, until the summer of 308 before proceeding to elect his successor. Marcellus, who was then chosen, inherited the dispute that had been raging, and insisted on the discipline which the Church has always maintained. Apostates were not to be debarred from the Church forever, but they could be restored to its communion only after expiating their sin by penance. The dispute endangered public order in the city and Maxentius, acting on the accusation of one who had become an apostate even before the outbreak of the persecution, banished Marcellus from Rome. He was succeeded by Eusebius in 309 or 310, who continued to maintain the usual discipline of the Church in the face of an opponent Heraclius, who was acclaimed Pope by the party that refused to submit to the infliction of penance. After four months both Eusebius and Heraclius were banished, the former to Sicily, where he died shortly afterwards.

In 308 Maxentius suffered a serious blow. It was probably the expulsion of his father from Rome that roused the soldiers in Africa to such a height of indignation that they rebelled and proclaimed the vicar of the Praetorian Prefect, L. Domitius Alexander, as Augustus. An inscription found in Proconsular Africa would seem to indicate that Constantine, who was already looking forward to marching against Maxentius when the suitable opportunity arrived, had some degree of responsibility for this revolt against Maxentius in Africa. Maxentius could ill afford to lose the African corn supply. Still, so long as he continued to hold Spain, the loss was not irreparable. Zosimus tells us that the soothsayers, whom Maxentius employed to seek the omens, met with an unfavorable response and that he in consequence abandoned his purpose to go to Africa, and quell the disturbance before the soldiers proclaimed Alexander. He asserts that Alexander was a timid and cowardly Phrygian, of advanced age and unfit for any undertaking whatsoever. The following year Maxentius met with a serious disappointment to his hopes in the death of his young son Romulus, whom he had hoped to have as his successor in his usurped power.

Maximian, after leaving Carnuntum in disgust at the failure of all his plans, made his way again to Gaul, where he was once more hospitably received by his son-in-law, Constantine, who gave him all the honors that his exalted rank might claim. It is even reported that Constantine allowed his aged guest to determine his policies for him. At all events, it is obvious that he had no suspicion that Maximian had come to him with treachery in his heart. Lactantius emphasizes the fact (such are the strange complications produced by dynastic marriages) that Constantine was not only Maximian's son-in-law, but also the son of his son-in-law, for Fausta (his own wife) and Theodora, his father's second wife, were daughter and step-daughter of Maximian; he says that when the Franks again took up arms, Maximian advised Constantine to march north with but a part of his army, since a very few troops would be sufficient against barbarians. It is difficult to understand how Constantine, who had now had years of experience in Frankish invasions, could have been deceived so easily. Maximian waited a few days. Then, when he thought that Constantine had had sufficient time to have crossed the Rhine, announced to the populace that he had been defeated and slain. For the third time, he assumed the purple, seized the treasuries, and assumed command of the legions that had remained behind. Constantine lost no time in returning from the Rhine, and Maximian fled in haste from Arles to Marseilles, where he was besieged. As Constantine approached the city he beheld Maximian on the walls and addressed him "in no unfriendly terms." He merely asked him why he had behaved in so unbecoming a manner and what it was that he wished to obtain. Maximian, from the walls, is reported to have uttered only curses and abuse in reply. Then suddenly, the soldiers, turning against Maximian, opened the gates of the city to Constantine, who marched in together with his army. The unnatural parent and faithless father-in-law, who had shown clearly that he would stoop to any kind of treachery in his mad ambition to recover the power he had once possessed, was dragged into the presence of Constantine, where the only penalty imposed by his magnanimous son-in-law was that he should have to listen to a recital of his crimes and once again be divested of the purple. This account of the incident, as given by Lactantius, is doubtless embellished to make the contrast as strong as possible between the tyrant and the hero. But certainly Maximian was compelled, probably chiefly by his own men, to surrender and to plead for clemency.

Lactantius has still another tale of the perfidy of Maximian. Not content with the leniency of Constantine in sparing his life, the old man now tried to murder the benefactor who had so generously treated him. The tale relates that he urged his daughter Fausta to betray her husband to him and promised to arrange a more suitable marriage for her. He asked her to allow Constantine's bed-chamber to be left open and only slightly guarded. This she arranged to do, but at the same time she revealed the plot to her husband, who arranged that an eunuch of a lower order should occupy his bed. In the dead of the night Maximian arose and accosted the few soldiers who were guarding the Emperor's bed-chamber from a distance, telling them that he had had a dream which he wished to relate to his son-in-law. Thus he was able to enter the bed-chamber armed, where he at once slew the eunuch, supposing him to be Constantine, and then burst forth boasting that he had slain the Emperor. At that Constantine, who had been in hiding not far away, appeared with a band of soldiers. The dead body of the eunuch was produced from the bed-chamber, and the murderer was caught red-handed. The death of Maximian followed very quickly, probably by Constantine's orders. There are various reports regarding the manner of his death. He seems to have been permitted to choose the method, and Lactantius states that his neck was broken. There is no lack of unanimity, however, with regard to his having received his just deserts. Eutropius and the two works that go under the name of Aurelius Victor are all agreed that he perished most justly.

It is difficult to understand the motive for Maximian's continued machinations against Constantine. It may be that he had decided to make up his quarrel with his son and to unite with him once more. If so Constantine would be the first obstacle to their progress to power. It was even reported that the quarrel between the father and the son was merely a fictitious device to conceal their true motive. It is quite possible that Maximian had once more entered into negotiations with Maxentius and planned to unite forces with him again, offering as his contribution a part of the army of Constantine. It is inconceivable that he should still have hoped to persuade Diocletian to resume the control of the Empire once more along with him. It is more probable that the resentment he had felt when he was first required to resign the purple had grown more intense with each period of inactivity, finally developing into an insane craving for power that passed all control and hesitated at no crime whatsoever. The tale of the attempted murder of Constantine in the version of Lactantius has, however, too much of the Oriental romance to win ready credence. It is probably the report that reached Nicomedia, with color added as it travelled to the East. Yet we may be certain of Maximian's overweening thirst for power, of his determination to recover the imperial office at all costs as often as he might be deprived of it, as well as of his treacherous deceitful nature. Other historians omit this tale. Eusebius is content with the mere statement that Maximian strangled himself. One of the Panegyrists says that, although Constantine offered him his life, he felt unworthy of the gift and committed suicide. This is even harder to believe than the highly colored tale of Lactantius.

It was obviously impossible for Constantine to continue to claim his authority on the basis of his relation to the Herculian dynasty. Married to Maximian's daughter, his position as Augustus recognized by Maximian, his *imperium* was established by an authentic title under the patronage of Hercules. Now that Maximian's acts had been nullified, his position as Augustus must find new authority. Moreover he would naturally wish to dissociate himself as completely as possible from every link that bound him to the cruel and faithless Maximian. A new claim appears at this time. Unlike the usurper Maxentius, whose only claim to rule was his association with the Herculian dynasty which his father had founded, Constantine, it now appears, was really descended from a line of emperors. His father was related to the Emperor Claudius Gothicus. Just what that relationship was never seems to have been made quite clear. One report was that he was a natural son; a later Christian version said a nephew. What were the facts? The Anonymous Valesianus calls Constantine a grandson of Claudius. Eusebius and Eutropius, who were contemporary in time, witness to the Claudian relationship, and the former popularizes it. Constantine's nephew, Julian the Apostate, later referred to it as a fact. Why, then, should it be questioned centuries later?

The very circumstances in which it was proclaimed are suspect. It was announced for the first time at Treves in 310, just at the time when it was necessary for Constantine to find a new constitutional basis for his position as a ruler in the Empire. The words with which Eumenius introduces this claim—"but those who love thee know best"—indicate that he was announcing something novel. Constantine was no mere member of the Herculii, recognized and adopted by the despised Maximian Herculius. He was actually born in the purple. If many were ignorant of this high lineage, what was the reason for that ignorance? Constantius Chlorus was no mere child in 270, when Claudius Gothicus died at the very town where it is generally believed that Constantine was born. It is barely conceivable that so important a fact should have remained a secret until exactly the moment when Constantine most needed to make use of it. Had Constantine commissioned Eumenius to insinuate this fresh revelation subtly into his speech, so that it might gradually win official acceptance and general credence throughout the Empire? Eumenius also refers to "Divus Claudius your progenitor" in his speech of thanks. Later he calls Constantine's attention to the fact that he alone has the outstanding witness of his majesty in the fact that he is actually an emperor, whose origin has such inherent nobility that nothing can add to the dignity of his office; there is nothing that fortune can add to his divine genius; he needs no quest for credentials nor assent. Again he is addressed as the third emperor after two princes of his house have already reigned. If it was a device to establish a claim that had no foundation in fact, and such it appears to have been, it was presented cleverly and met with a high degree of success. The principle of hereditary dynastic succession was also accepted incidentally with the tale of imperial descent. His status was unique among those who were now ruling the Empire.

A religious motive seems also to have been included in this claim. No longer could Constantine claim Hercules as his patron; nor, indeed, would he wish to. *Sol Invictus* now appears on his coins and is adopted as the patron of the legitimate dynasty. The Herculian past is to be forgotten. He apparently identified Sol Invictus with Apollo. After the death of Maximian, the orator presented an imaginary picture in which he represented Constantine's protecting deity as appearing to him in the temple which he was visiting, accompanied by Fortune and bearing wreaths which brought the promise of a reign of thirty years. Maximian's coinage at Rome, when he became Augustus for the second time, had expressed the wish that the third decade of his rule might be prosperous. Apollo could do no less for his protégé.

In 311 several significant events occurred. One of these was that Constantine found the opportunity to restore Spain to his rule. Another was the famine that arose at Rome as the result of the rebellion in Africa. On one occasion a great fire broke out in the city. In the confusion that accompanied it there was street fighting between the Praetorians and the hungry populace. It was only the intervention of Maxentius himself that prevented a massacre on a large scale. At length he became sufficiently roused from his lethargy to despatch to Africa his Praetorian Prefect Rufus Volusianus, who in a short time put an end to the rebellion and slew Alexander. The reconquest of Africa and the heavy exactions laid upon Carthage brought a renewal of the food supply and a return of prosperity to Rome. Maxentius was elated. He celebrated the victory with a triumph and caused coins to be struck in honor of his father, Maximian, whom he now, forgetful of the recent breach between them, had deified; and also in memory of Constantius, the father of Constantine. By this means he made it evident that he claimed the rule of the entire Western half of the Empire. Such a claim Constantine could not quietly ignore.

More important still was the death of Galerius in May of

311. He had been preparing for some time to celebrate his Vicennalia on May 1, and, to meet the great expense involved in this celebration, had been levying very burdensome taxes. It was evidently his intention to abdicate at that time, for he had been suffering for more than a year with a loathsome and incurable disease. His death came before he could celebrate the Vicennalia, but not before he had put forth an amazing edict. Perhaps because he felt that his fatal illness had been brought upon him by the vengeance of the God of the Christians whom he had persecuted, perhaps because he realized at last the futility of the persecution, Galerius now proclaimed, subject to certain restrictions, freedom of worship for the Christians. It is a strange document that was dictated by his last agonies—"half abusive, half suppliant, which begins by insulting the Christians, and ends by asking them to pray to their Master for him." This edict, which was issued at Nicomedia on April 23, was as follows:

"Among our other regulations for the permanent advantage of the Commonweal, up until now we have undertaken to reduce all things to conformity with the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans.

"It has been our purpose in particular that the Christians, who had abandoned the religion of their forefathers, should return to right opinions. For such wilfulness and folly had, we know not how, so taken possession of them that, instead of observing these ancient institutions, which perhaps their own forebears had established, they through caprice made laws for themselves and drew together into different societies many men of quite different persuasions.

"After the publication of our edict, ordaining that the Christians should betake themselves to the observance of the ancient institutions, many of them were subdued through the fear of danger; many besides, were exposed to jeopardy; nevertheless, since large numbers still persist in their opinions, and since we have realized that now they neither revere and pay due worship to the gods, nor adore their own God, therefore we, as a result of our customary clemency in granting pardon to all, have judged it fitting to extend our indulgence to those men, and to permit them again to be Christians, and to establish the places of their religious assemblies, so long as they offend not against order.

"By another mandate we purpose to make known to magistrates how they should conduct themselves in these matters.

"Wherefore, in return for our indulgence, it will be the duty of the Christians to pray to their God for our welfare, also for that of the State and of themselves; so that the Commonweal may enjoy complete prosperity, and that they may themselves live in security in their homes."

We can read in this document the grudging toleration reluctantly granted by one who still hated the Christians, in his hour of terror and poignant physical suffering. But now he makes it known that he had never been a persecutor. On the contrary he had really been a reformer who had hoped to bring the Christians to a better mind. There were divisions among them, and that had shocked him. They had not been willing to be either good pagans or good Christians. Yet, since the wholesome remedial measures of persecution have failed, once more they may be Christians. The edict is filled with contradictions. Perhaps it was intended to placate the pagans at the same time that it granted reluctant tolerance to the Christians. Unfortunately the instructions to the magistrates have not survived. There were contained in them, without question, provisions that would be humiliating to the followers of the religion he hated. Maximin Daia did not sign this document, but, a little later, in his provinces, where the persecution had been more severe than elsewhere in the Empire, the magistrates were told quietly to desist from their measures against the Christians.

Galerius was not spared an agonizing death by the prayers of either Christians or pagans. He died a few days later at Serdica, in his native province, and was buried at Romulianum, the place that was named for his mother. He made no provision regarding the succession in the Empire. His wife and children he commended to the care of Licinius. He had done his utmost to destroy the Christians. On his deathbed he was not really conferring any extraordinary benefits on them. The protection of the State would probably reduce them to the condition of the hereditary guilds, which would mean that they would sooner or later become extinct.

Maxentius had not persecuted the Christians. After the publishing of the edict of Galerius, he became even more lenient towards them. But his popularity was rapidly waning as he became more cruel, lustful, and slothful. The recovery of Africa and the renewal of prosperity at Rome through the confiscation of African estates had made him more arrogant. Constantine's recovery of Spain made it evident that his claims to the entire West were not to go unchallenged. Now that Maxentius had discovered that he had such deep devotion to the memory of his deified father, his outraged feelings would not allow him to suffer his father's death to go unavenged. Constantine, who meanwhile had been watching every development, realized the inevitability of war with Maxentius. He would wait, however, until the arrival of the propitious moment before striking.

Chapter VI

CONSTANTINE AND MAXENTIUS

When Galerius died the situation in the Empire was ominous. There were four Augusti, and there was little chance of any accord among them. It had been the purpose of Galerius that Licinius should be his successor. The nephew of Galerius, Maximin Daia, had, however, reigned much longer than Licinius, and insisted that the seniority belonged to him. He wasted no time, but proceeded to make his way across Asia Minor to Nicomedia where, once in possession, he sought to ingratiate himself with the people of Bithynia by abolishing the census. Licinius, remaining in Europe, could only accept the inevitable and limit himself to the Danubian provinces. Daia, who had now added all the provinces of Asia Minor to those of Syria and Egypt which he had held before, proceeded to rescind the toleration which had been granted to the Christians by the dying Galerius, and to attempt to solidify paganism by giving it something of the organization which was characteristic of the Church. In each city a high priest was set up to offer daily sacrifices, in which the Christians were to be compelled to participate. Superintendent priests were appointed for the various provinces, analogous to the bishops of the Christians, who were to have their religious authority reinforced by the eminent positions they already held in the State. Literature and learning were to be utilized to make the pagan revival effective. Daia pretended to show great clemency towards the Christians by substituting the penalty of mutilation for that of death. Settled now at Nicomedia, with all the provinces east of the Hellespont under his control, it seemed for a time that the conflict betwen the two Augusti of the East must soon develop into open warfare. This was averted, however, by a meeting at the Hellespont at which an agreement was reached. There was to be the dividing line between what were actually two distinct and mutually hostile states.

Maxentius continued to hold sway in Rome, claiming, in addition to Italy and Africa, the provinces of Spain, which had now actually returned to the rule of Constantine. Although unrecognized by the other three Augusti, his position remained none the less unchallenged at Rome. But even there public opinion was growing more and more hostile to him. With the support of the Praetorians he had maintained his sway by emphasizing the ancient dignity and the religious significance of the city. His coins bear the evidence of this policy. He had shown humanity, even partiality, towards the persecuted Christians, in the attempt to gain their support. The banishment of the Popes Marcellus and Eusebius had been actuated by the determination to rid the city of faction and disorder rather than by any thought of persecution. With the edict of toleration of Galerius the Christians had had restored to them some, at least, of their confiscated property, including the Catacombs of St. Callistus; and the bodies of the exiled Popes were brought back to the city and deposited in those catacombs. But the innate cruelty of Maxentius was evident in the devastation of Carthage and Cirta and in the many barbarities that accompanied the suppression of the revolt in Africa. The rule of Maxentius in Rome itself became constantly more despotic until both the Praetorians and the populace were detached from their loyalty to him. Even the pagan writers are agreed with regard to his brutality and lust. Zosimus states that he conducted himself with utter cruelty and licentiousness towards all the people of Italy, while Julian the Apostate, in his Lucianic Dialogue, *The Banquet of the Caesars*, calls him unmilitary and effeminate, and does not even admit him to the society of decent people. Eusebius, who dwells on his unbridled sensuality, tells of a noble and modest Christian woman, the wife of a Prefect of Rome, who stabbed herself to escape his advances. Eutropius says that he vexed the nobles of Rome in every way, while Aurelius Victor tells us that he was the first to begin the practice of exacting from the Senators large sums of money under the guise of voluntary gifts on the most flimsy pretexts of public need, or in payment for offices or civil honors. One of the Panegyrists of Constantine declares that Maxentius despoiled temples, butchered the Senate, and starved the people of Rome. It is difficult to accept the story told by a panegyrist that he would boast to the soldiers that he was the only ruler in the Empire; that he had colleagues, but that they merely guarded the frontier, while he ruled. After this arrogant address, he would send them off with the parting injunction: "Enjoy yourselves, squander, make free!" Yet, on the evidence of the pagan writers, Lactantius' description of the profligate usurper does not seem to be exaggerated. As Maxentius lost control of the situation the Praetorians became the actual rulers of Rome, and a veritable reign of terror prevailed. Zosimus states that after the riot that followed the fire in the Temple of Fortune when Maxentius found it necessary to intervene, he was quite determined to make war on Constantine, using as his pretext the fact that Constantine had caused his father Maximian to be put to death. As his plans to oppose Constantine developed, Maxentius seems to have felt an increasing and affectionate devotion to the memory of his revered father.

Constantine, convinced that the struggle for the mastery of the West was inevitable, was doubtless quite as determined as

Maxentius in his decision to enter into armed conflict. His aim was quite simple—to expel the usurper and to secure the undisputed rule of the entire West for himself. To achieve this end, he must form an alliance with one of the Augusti of the East, to secure his neutrality while the war was in progress. He may have made some overtures to Maximin Daia, but it was evident that the one who chiefly needed and desired a coalition with him was Licinius. Already deprived of his provinces beyond the Bosphorus, Licinius could not but be apprehensive of the moves that Daia might make against him in the future. Constantine entered into an alliance with Licinius and betrothed to him his half-sister, Constantia. Maximin Daia immediately sent messengers to Maxentius, asking for a friendly alliance, which he readily granted.

It was an undertaking that demanded great courage to advance through Italy to attack Maxentius at Rome. Severus and Galerius had failed signally in this enterprise and had been obliged to leave Maxentius in possession of the city and of the provinces he had seized. Maxentius was far better provided with troops than Constantine, who was obliged to leave the greater part of his army still in Gaul to protect it against the dangers of invasion by the Germanic tribes. If it was Constantine who actually took the initiative and provoked the conflict, he surely did so with scant prospects of victory, relying in part on the disaffection of the Roman populace and of the Praetorians, and confident that, with Licinius as his ally, he was at all events protected against an attack on his flank. There has been a great divergence of opinion as to whether it was Constantine or Maxentius who was really responsible for declaring war. Most probably it was Constantine who, after waiting and watching the development of events for a long time, despite the heavy odds against him, decided to take the offensive. There could be but one master of the West and, fortified by his new claim to unique authority to witness the legitimacy of his title to rule, under the patronage of SOL INVICTUS COMES, his companion and protector, he set forth from Gaul early in the spring of 312 to vindicate that claim.

The figures that are given by Zosimus of the respective armies of Constantine and Maxentius are not to be accepted without reservation. The force of 188,000 which he attributes to Maxentius is doubtless exaggerated, but his army was probably four times as large as Constantine's. Moreover the forces of Maxentius had the Praetorians and the experienced soldiers of Maximian Herculius, who had deserted from Galerius and Severus, as their nucleus. He also had a body of *cataphracti,* that innovation from the Persian use of armored cavalry whose horses were also armored, of which mention has already been made. The troops of Maxentius were, however, lacking in enthusiasm and had for a considerable period been demoralized by the general relaxation of discipline. Maxentius himself was no general, while Constantine had already shown himself proficient and capable as well as popular with his soldiers and able to command their loyalty and cooperation. The struggle between these two was fraught with tremendous consequences for the future course of civilization. Throughout its duration, although the alliance with Licinius afforded Constantine a sense of security from attack on his flank, neither ally contributed any active service.

Maxentius kept the greater part of his army in Rome under his personal command, adding to the fortifications of the city and providing great supplies of food as if in anticipation of a siege. On the walls of the city he erected a gallery equipped with loop-holes towards the country and with open arcades towards the city, which provided a covered passage. Above this gallery was an open walk with a parapet protecting it on the outer side. It was a wall unsurpassed in the Roman world, and one which might be expected to withstand the attack of any army. The remainder of his army was despatched to northern Italy, extending from Susa, where Constantine might be expected to enter from the Alpine passes, to Venetia, where there was the possibility of an attack from the East by Licinius. At Verona some of his best troops were stationed under the command of an able general, Ruricius Pompeianus, to guard the Brenner Pass.

Constantine, who was not only handicapped by vastly inferior numbers, but had to contend also against the grumbling and fears of his chief officers who were alarmed because of unfavorable omens, proceeded at once over Mont Genèvre and took by surprise the reinforced garrison at Segusio (Susa). His six years of military experience in Gaul were a distinct advantage to him, and he knew well the advantage of swift action. Segusio was quickly taken by storm, and it speaks well for the discipline of Constantine's army that there was no plundering of the town. As the report of this restraint made its way to the other Italian cities they readily opened their gates to the advancing army. The next engagement was in the vicinity of Turin. Here the center of Constantine's line feigned to give way before the advance of the *cataphracti,* the heavily armored cavalry of Maxentius. Then by a deft manoeuvre the wings of Constantine's army wheeled about and closed in on the heavily weighted cavalry, enveloping them and laying low both horses and riders. As the army of Maxentius fled in retreat, Turin closed its gates and then surrendered to Constantine, after he had dispersed and destroyed the remainder of the army of Maxentius. Milan opened its gates to the swiftly advancing forces and, after a brief engagement at Brixia (Brescia), he proceeded to the siege of Verona. He now had possession of Italy between the Alps and the Po, that territory which had been known formerly as Cisalpine Gaul. But it was necessary, before advancing towards Rome, to continue to the east and win control of Venetia where the remaining troops of Maxentius were stationed, to protect his lines of communication with Licinius.

In Ruricius Pompeianus he had to meet a general of both skill and experience, who held a strategic position at Verona, situated in a narrow loop of the Adige where it could be approached from but one side by land while, on the opposite side, it had access to Venetia by a bridge. It was a situation that could not be blockaded. Moreover the Adige at this point is a swift flowing stream with steep banks. Constantine crossed the river during the night and began the siege of the city. Ruricius made his way through the forces of Constantine and began to collect a force outside the city for its relief. Constantine, while continuing the siege of the city, moved out with some of his forces to meet the reinforcements under Ruricius. The battle lasted far into the night, but when it ended Ruricius had been slain and the troops gathered for the relief of the city dispersed. Verona capitulated and shortly after, Modena succumbed, after a brief siege. In the battle against Ruricius outside Verona Constantine distinguished himself by his valor. Seriously outnumbered, he thinned his lines and extended his front more widely. As he advanced into the thickest of the fray, one of his paneygrists relates that his officers received him panting and exhausted, his hands dripping with blood. They rebuked him with tears in their eyes. "It does not befit an Emperor," they said, "to strike down an enemy with his own sword. It is not fitting that he sweat with the toil of battle."

All northern Italy was now in his hands, but it had been won at tremendous cost. It was with a depleted and reduced army that Constantine now turned towards the conquest of Rome. The odds were more than ever against him, but there was a compelling force that induced him, despite his years of experience in the field, to press on towards his objective, regardless of risk, with every indication that he could expect only defeat. It was obviously not that he might liberate the Christians that he undertook this hazardous expedition, for under Maxentius, and more particularly since the edict of Galerius, they had been subjected to no persecution. When one realizes the small chance of success he had, it is doubtful if the mere determination to rid Rome of the usurper and to settle once and for all the question of the supremacy of the West would have been sufficient to impel him to press on at this time. Constantine had passed through an experience—psychological or spiritual, according as one interprets it—which not only left no other path open to him but actually assured him of victory. Just what this experience was and how it came to him, we shall reserve for later consideration.

Proceeding south from Verona, at Bononia (Bologna) he reached the Via Emilia, along which he made his way to Ariminum (Rimini) and thence to Fanum Fortunae (Fano). From that point the Via Flaminia led directly to Rome. Through the Pass of Furlo and down the Via Flaminia through Umbria he advanced with such swiftness that, within two months of his victory at Verona, he had arrived at Saxa Rubra, only nine miles north of Rome. Maxentius, meanwhile, had remained in his palace, the victim of fear and superstition. He seemed scarcely to realize the significance of the mighty strides with which Constantine was approaching. Then, at length, roused from his lethargy, it is related that he caused the Sibylline books to be brought to him and consulted. In them the answer was given that on the anniversary of his accession the enemy of Rome would perish. Such oracular predictions, readily capable of two interpretations, had in the past often heralded the downfall of the ruler who consulted the omens of the future. The tale may be fictitious, but it would seem that Constantine's desire to draw Maxentius outside the walls was achieved, not by his efforts, but by the Sibylline response. Driven from the palace, we are told, by the dreadful dreams and visions that haunted him there, Maxentius now took up his abode in a private house. Then, suddenly, perhaps moved by the words of the Sibyl, or, more probably, because he feared what the Roman populace might do in the event of a siege, he decided to go forth. He had sent some of his troops to meet Constantine's forces at Saxa Rubra, but had intended himself to be present at the games and festivities that marked his anniversary. He had apparently kept the larger part of the troops inside the city with him, while sending out only a smaller force under his generals. He wished to give the impression of feeling no fear at the approach of the enemy. Now suddenly he decided to put on his armor and ride out of the city with his forces.

The advance guard of Maxentius had crossed the Tiber by the Milvian Bridge and a bridge of boats that had been built beside it, and had made its way to Saxa Rubra. In the first encounter they seem to have been victorious. Then Constantine apparently brought his troops nearer to Rome, coming over the ridges beneath which the troops of Maxentius were drawn up. He contrived to mass his men on both sides of the road, with the flanks protected by the slopes on either side. The troops of Maxentius were hemmed in between the hills and the river. The battle had already begun when Maxentius, certain of victory, arrived on the scene. Constantine charged the enemy with his cavalry and the infantry followed. It was a bitter struggle, but, when the lines of Maxentius gave way before the cavalry attack, they had no place of retreat but the Tiber. The Praetorians offered stubborn resistance, but the cavalry and other forces of Maxentius, broken by the attack of Constantine's cavalry, attempted to flee in disorder. The bridge of boats gave way under the pressure of the numbers who tried to retreat by it after the Milvian Bridge became jammed. It was reported that the supports of the pontoon bridge had been treacherously severed. A later tale ran to the effect that Maxentius had caused the supports to be cut in the hope of trapping Constantine, only to fall into the snare that he had himself prepared. Tremendous losses were inflicted on the retreating forces of Maxentius and vast numbers were drowned in the Tiber in their attempt to escape. Maxentius, weighed down by his heavy armor, perished among these fugitives.

Constantine's victory was complete. He entered Rome in triumph, bearing the head of Maxentius, which had been recovered from the river. In the triumphal procession that marched through the streets of Rome there were no captive chiefs and barbarians in chains. Instead there were Senators and men of consular rank, who had been set free by the victory of Constantine. The Praetorian Guard was completely disbanded. Those of its members who survived were sent away from Rome to devote the remainder of their lives to the defense of the Rhine and the Danube. The day of the Praetorians was definitely at an end. They had been too powerful and had in recent times caused too much terror to be sorely missed by the populace. Still the Rome that had been liberated was no longer mistress of the world. Shorn of its ancient glory, it was now a city of relative insignificance. Its chief interest was antiquarian. There was doubtless a hope for some restoration of the dignity of the past in the hearts of the Senators and the populace who now gave an enthusiastic reception to the deliverer, for as such he was regarded rather than as a victor.

Eusebius would give the impression that on the day after his victory Constantine issued from Rome without any delay an edict of complete toleration. This statement has been accepted by many historians, but it seems doubtful in the light of the fact that there was no need for such an edict in Italy. Maxentius had already restored the confiscated property to the Church and had permitted Pope Eusebius to translate the bodies of his predecessors who had died in exile, and to inter them in the cemetery of St. Callistus. It is more probable that his first step, so far as concerned the Christians, was to write to Maximin Daia announcing the defeat of Maxentius, and that it was this letter that caused Daia to send to Sabinus the rescripts that we shall consider later, which granted a limited toleration to the Christians in the East.

Daia had been the ally of Maxentius. Now it was well that he should become acquainted with the situation without delay. He, in turn, would feel that it was to his advantage to strengthen his position with the victor, at least for a time. It is reported that one of Constantine's first acts on entering Rome was to destroy the statues of Maximian Herculius and, along with them, those of Diocletian, which together formed a sort of Janus. Diocletian is said to have learned with great sorrow that all his statues had been dragged through the streets of Rome and then broken. This tale has been cited as evidence of the vindictive nature of Constantine and of his unrelenting hatred towards Diocletian. It is doubtful if this is so. If the report be true, it was but natural that every vestige of the Herculian dynasty should be removed from Rome and from Italy with as little delay as possible. To read into an incident of this sort, for which there is but slight evidence at the best, complex motives, is quite without justification.

What we do know of Constantine's actions after his entry into Rome is greatly to his credit. He granted a general amnesty, putting to death only the widow and the surviving son of

Maxentius with a few of his closest adherents. The House of Maximian Herculius, together with his magnificent ambitions, thus became extinct. So few others were executed that Constantine's victory won the name of being bloodless. New laws were immediately enacted which gave evidence of his desire both to show forth his clemency and to rehabilitate the city. He filled the vacant places in the Senate, not with Romans, however, but with distinguished men from the various provinces. This was not an act of deep significance, for none of the ancient authority and privileges which had belonged to the Senate in the past were restored to it.

The Senate, in turn, conferred upon Constantine the title of Senior Augustus and erected a golden statue of him adorned with the attributes of a god. Some authorities have held that this statue was not erected immediately after Constantine's victory over Maxentius, but at the time of his next visit to Rome. Eusebius says that he erected a statue of himself, bearing a cross in his hand, with the inscription: "By this salutary sign, the true proof of bravery, I have saved and freed your city from the yoke of the tyrant; and, moreover, having set at liberty both the Senate and the people of Rome, I have restored them to their ancient distinction and splendor." It was probably a statue such as the pagan Romans would have erected to a deified Emperor, to which Constantine added the cross and the inscription. The erection of a statue to Constantine at the time of his victory would appear to have been demanded by the situation, since the Panegyrist Nazarius reports that Maxentius had declared hostilities against Constantine by overthrowing and defacing his statues at Rome.

The Senate also decreed games and festivals, and voted the triumphal arch which still stands near the arch of Titus and the Colosseum. This arch has given rise to extensive discussion. Was it constructed by plundering the works of Trajan and other Emperors of the second century? Had artistic achievement sunk so low that an arch to Constantine could only be erected by utilizing the work of the past? Was it an arch built originally in Trajan's time, and worked over in the time of Constantine? It has even been suggested that it was erected originally in the time of Domitian and that, when the memory of Domitian was formally cursed, it was mutilated, and thus was ready at hand to be reconstituted in honor of Constantine. De Rossi, who made a careful study of this arch in the last century, decided that the dedicatory inscription, carved on marble blocks, formed an integral part of the original structure, and that there had never been any other inscription carved on them. Lanciani, in more recent times, pronounced the inside of the structure to have been built with a great variety of materials taken from the monuments belonging to the Fabii and the Arruntii, but pronounced the bricks to be contemporary with Constantine. From the artistic standpoint the reliefs on this arch are of intense interest, indicating the combination of two styles—the one of provincial peasant type, the other the popular realistic style which, particularly in the scenes of the victory of the Milvian Bridge and the Triumphal Procession, show an emancipation from tradition and a convincing vigor and forcefulness. New touches of realism mark the revival of Roman artistic achievement and give evidence of a renewed vitality that promised a long life to Roman artistic creation.

Still more discussion has developed about the inscription on the arch, and more particularly with regard to the significance of two words which it contains. These two words, *"instinctu divinitatis,"* which appear to be a literal translation into Latin of a phrase used by Plutarch with reference to Alexander the Great, may be translated, "by divine suggestion." The whole inscription may be translated thus:

"To the Emperor, Caesar Flavius Constantinus Maximus, Pius, Felix, Augustus, since by divine suggestion and by his greatness of mind, with the help of his army, he has justly avenged the republic at the same time both upon the tyrant and upon his entire party, the Senate and the Roman People have dedicated this arch notable for triumphs."

Chapter VII

CONSTANTINE'S CONVERSION

What was the meaning of those words "by divine suggestion" on the triumphal arch of Constantine? It is obvious that a victory such as he had won against apparently overwhelming odds, in the face of what must have appeared to be insuperable difficulties, was attributed by the pagan Senators to something more than his mental gifts—gifts of astute and able generalship—and the assistance of his armies. A divine power had been working with him that made possible the liberation of the people of Rome from the tyrant. The heathen panegyrist, Nazarius, who reviews Constantine's whole campaign against Maxentius in the Oration delivered on the Emperor's tenth anniversary, regards the outcome of this decisive campaign as the result of divine assistance. He tells of wonders that appeared in the sky of which, he says, all Gaul was talking. Constantine's troops had not only seen heavenly armies marching in battle array, but they had also heard the shouts of these armies, "We seek Constantine: we are coming to the aid of Constantine." "Constantius Chlorus was seen leading the heavenly legions to the assistance of his son." "There was a secret divine power working with him." "What man would fail to believe that a god was giving him divine protection?" Such was the pagan point of view.

The Christian writers had their own explanation, but there are discrepancies in their accounts which have tended to discredit them. Lactantius describes a dream. This is the earliest version of the events leading to Constantine's conversion and, since the author was for some time a member of Constantine's household and the tutor of his son Crispus, it may be regarded as having a definite authority. This narrative relates that "Constantine (when he was encamped near the Milvian Bridge) was directed in a dream to cause the heavenly sign to be delineated on the shields of his soldiers, and so to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their shields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it, and turned round at the top, this being the cipher of Christ. Having this sign, his troops stood to arms." The account goes on to relate the story of the battle and of Constantine's complete victory. There is no reference in this narrative to a miraculous vision nor to Constantine's conversion. It merely associates his victory with the use of a monogram, which is not exclusively Christian, but which had been already used as a symbol of the Sun-god. Some forms which are nearly identical with this monogram have been found on coins in Western Asia from an earlier period; one form, in fact, was used in pre-Christian times on coins of Herod I. The form which appears to be nearest to that adopted by Constantine is found on Phrygian and Lydian coins belonging to the time of the early Roman Emperors, and seems to have become most common about the time of Septimius Severus. Before Constantine's victory over Maxentius the Christians appear to have used the monogram merely as an abbreviation of the word Christ. After Constantine's victory it seems to have come into common use as a definitely Christian symbol.

Eusebius has given us two independent narratives; the one, in his History of the Church written before 326, is a brief account of the conflict in which the only reference to divine aid coming to Constantine is the statement that the Emperor "piously called to his assistance the God of Heaven and His

Son Jesus Christ." It was probably eleven years later that he wrote the full account in his Life of Constantine. He tells us there that Constantine himself related the experience to him and confirmed it with an oath. Thus he makes Constantine rather than himself responsible for the description of visible divine intervention. The story, as here given, relates that somewhere on his journey from Gaul to Rome, shortly after noonday, Constantine saw in the sky a cross of light with the words, "In this conquer"; that the soldiers saw the cross as well; and that in a dream on the following night Christ appeared to Constantine and commanded him to take the cross for his standard. Eusebius relates that this experience came to Constantine after he had been thinking seriously what sort of a god he ought to enlist as his ally. "Then," says Eusebius, "the thought came to him that, although his predecessors in the purple had believed in a multiplicity of gods, most of them had failed wretchedly. They had been deceived by flattering predictions and oracles, which promised them all prosperity, and had at last met with an unhappy end, while not one of their gods had stood by to warn them of the impending wrath of heaven. Then he thought of one alone, his father, who had pursued an entirely opposite course, who had condemned their error, and honored the one Supreme God during his whole lifetime, had found him to be the Saviour and Protector of his empire, and the Giver of every good thing. He went on to meditate on the end of those who had trusted in many gods, and in particular on the fate of Severus and Galerius, who had attempted to take up arms against the tyrant. These thoughts led him to judge it folly to join in idle worship of those who were no gods, and, after such evidence, to err from the truth; and so felt it incumbent upon him to honor his father's god alone."

The discrepancies between the accounts of Lactantius and of Eusebius are not as serious as they at first might seem. It is extraordinary that the account given by Lactantius contains no reference to a miraculous vision or to Constantine's conversion. It merely associates his victory with the use of a monogram, which was not exclusively Christian, but which had been used already as a symbol of the Sun-god. It has been argued that this was the acceptance, not of a religion, or of the symbol of a religion, but of a luck-token, which Constantine, who was unquestionably prone to superstition, believed would bring him victory. Yet the fact remains that, apparently as a result of this dream, Constantine did adopt as a mark on the shields of his soldiers a sign which, as far as we can learn, was never regarded by any of his pagan contemporaries as a symbol of the Sun-god, but as the monogram of Christ. Moreover this took place at a time when the Christians certainly did not number more than one-tenth of the population of the Empire, and were far more numerous in the persecuted East than they were in the West, with which Constantine was primarily concerned. Lactantius was obviously describing a dream which was not at all the same as the vision athwart the sky at noonday later described by Eusebius. This dream resulted in the adoption of a sign he had not used before on the standards or shields of his soldiers. This is described as taking place just outside Rome on the very eve of the decisive battle.

Eusebius is undoubtedly describing quite a different experience. The fact that he did not mention this vision in his History of the Church is not really significant. It is most probable that Eusebius never saw Constantine between the time that he beheld him in Palestine as a young man and 325, the year of the Council of Nicaea, which is the probable date of the final edition of his History of the Church. The vision which he later described in his life of Constantine was, in all probability, still unknown to him unless as an unauthenticated rumor, at the time that he completed his earlier work. What he did know was that the victory over Maxentius was commonly associated in the minds of the Christians throughout the Empire with Constantine's acceptance of the true God. He therefore, in his History, relates merely that Constantine won this victory after supplicating the God of the Christians and His divine Son. To reject the narrative in the Life of Constantine as an interpolation from a later period is quite arbitrary and without justification. It is far more reasonable to accept the statements in the Life of Constantine at their face value. Constantine himself, at a much later period, related his experience to his biographer. It came to him, therefore, on the highest authority. Constantine affirmed his statement with an oath. The sole witness to this vision, then, is the Emperor himself. Eusebius did not doubt the veracity of the Emperor's solemn statement. Is there any reason for us many centuries later to discard it? Whether or not the Emperor was deceived or was the victim of an extraordinary psychological condition or even of a disordered mental state is beside the question. We have a clear statement of what he believed had happened to him, and there is no reason for us to doubt his sincerity.

Nor is it significant that we have no testimony from any of the soldiers who are reported also to have seen the vision. Such testimony would be very difficult to get. Armies were constantly on the move. A quarter of a century elapsed between the time that the event was supposed to have taken place and the time when Eusebius wrote the account of it, which he had then received from Constantine. These soldiers were, presumably, for the most part pagans. It would be interesting to know just what their reaction to the vision was, if they actually saw it. Henceforth they bore on their shields the sacred sign which came to be recognized as a Christian symbol. The *labarum,* the standard fashioned from a long gilded spear with a transverse bar which suggested a cross, became from this time forward their standard. Did they attribute their victory to the God Whom Constantine had now adopted as his God, or to the symbol of that God, which they were now wearing? In other words, did they believe that their success in the battle against the forces of Maxentius was due to the direct intervention of the true God, or to the adoption of what proved to be a lucky talisman, even though associated with a religion which they did not accept? These are questions which we would be glad to be able to answer, but, unfortunately, no data for solving them are available. Subsequent history records many reputed appearances of the cross athwart the sun. Did all of these visions have definite objective reality, or is it to be claimed in an unique way for the vision of Constantine? This is a question which will, obviously, be answered differently according to the temperament, the outlook, and type of religious belief of the individual. Moreover different periods induce different interpretations of what is not readily explicable. The tendency in a materialistic age is to regard the conversion of Constantine as an astute political move or as a superstitious adoption of a magical charm in response to an imaginary miraculous occurrence which can be explained as a purely natural phenomenon of not too rare occurrence. An age of faith inclines instinctively to a supernatural explanation of every unusual experience. In such an age many will see in the experience of Constantine a miracle which is justified by the tremendous significance of the event which it heralds. The fact of divine intervention in human affairs is not in harmony with the rationalistic and materialist-scientific spirit of our age. In other times it has been the generally accepted explanation of many unusual occurrences. The establishment of any particular miraculous event is dependent upon the evidence that can be adduced to prove its credibility. The probability of such an event must be conditioned by its evident importance in the effects that it can produce. The appearance of the first Christian Emperor would appear to be an event fraught with the deepest significance in the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the world. Yet, as we trace the relationship between Constantine and the Church, and the effects of his adoption of the Christian religion on the later history of the Church, it will become increasingly obvious that it was not an unmixed blessing.

The later accounts of Constantine's vision are of slight importance for the historian, for they merely continue to record what has by the time these works were written, won general acceptance in the Christian community. There is, however, a significant statement in Cyril of Jerusalem regarding a vision of the Cross which Constantius, the son of Constantine, was reported to have seen in the heavens in 351. Cyril observes that Constantius was more richly blessed than his father, for Constantine had but found in the earth the true Cross, while his son had seen it in the sky. This would seem to indicate either that Cyril was not familiar with the story of the vision of Constantine as recorded by Eusebius, or else that he did not regard Eusebius' narrative as trustworthy.

That Constantine was predisposed to look for visible signs and to accept them as divinely sent is beyond question. Paganism, as he had known it from childhood, looked for and found frequent expression of the divine will through outward signs. In Livy we constantly meet with "signs," in Tacitus with "wonders." In the Aeneid Nisus asks his companion: "Do the gods, Euryalus, put this fire in our hearts, or does his own bitter yearning become a god to each man?" Not only was the atmosphere in which Constantine grew up a religious one, but it was one in which men sought by various means both to win the protection of the gods and to learn their will. Still more, Constantine was by nature inclined to superstition. He believed in incantations and in evil omens. In setting forth against a formidable foe who commanded vastly larger troops than he could muster, he quite naturally sought in all the ways known to him to win divine protection. He consulted the *haruspices,* but when the omens were unfavorable, he defied them. If the gods of the pagans were unpropitious, he was probably quite ready to transfer his allegiance to another god, if one more favorable and more powerful could be found. Even after he had adopted the God of the Christians he made it lawful still to use ancient rites of divination for the prevention of rain and hail and to protect health. Nine years after the defeat of Maxentius he made a law that "when a thunderbolt strikes on a public monument, the *haruspex* is to be summoned and consulted in accordance with the ancient usages, and the response is to be brought to the Emperor." Not only was such a person ready to accept as a miracle any unusual occurrence, but still more would a miracle be the most effective agent in bringing about his conversion.

Zosimus describes Constantine as continuing to practise the pagan religion until after his victory over Licinius, although "not so much out of honor and veneration as from necessity," and as being led towards the forsaking of his national rites by a Spaniard named Aegyptius. This story is manifestly impossible, for we shall find that immediately after the victory over Maxentius Constantine began to show definite favor to the Christians, and unquestionably regarded their God as his God. The Spaniard Aegyptius is quite probably to be identified with Hosius of Cordova, the confessor who had endured a long period of imprisonment during the persecution, and who was a little later closely associated with Constantine. Zosimus represents this Aegyptius as being very familiar with the ladies of the court, and as exerting his influence over Constantine at

Rome after the murder of Crispus and Fausta, that is after 326, when the pagan priests could offer him no purification for his crimes. The whole story is manifestly misdated and false. Yet, it apparently contains elements of a tradition that was to gain wide credence later, the significance of which we must defer for subsequent consideration. There are, however, definite evidences of a profound interest in religion in Constantine at this time, which would seem to indicate that he was investigating and perhaps making trial of various cults, with a view to finding the truth. Ammianus Marcellinus tells of how he investigated various religious sects, such as that of the Manichaeans, and relates that he chose a man named Musonianus, who in later times governed the East with the rank of a Praetorian Prefect, as an interpreter. Julian the Apostate refers to a special Helios or Sun cult which his uncle followed. Constantine was obviously of a deeply religious nature, not free from superstition, interested in learning the beliefs and practices of the various cults that were popular in the Empire, and particularly susceptible to any supernatural manifestation, whether actual or produced by his own overwrought mental state.

Postponing the consideration of the various motives that have been attributed for Constantine's conversion, as well as the discussion of its real significance, we may now attempt to describe, as nearly as we can, just what it was that took place on the journey of Constantine from Gaul to Rome, and what was the change effected in his religious outlook and loyalty by the victory over Maxentius. So far as concerned Constantine himself, what was the real significance of those words, "*instinctu divinitatis*"?

In the early years of his reign Constantine was, unquestionably, a pagan of deep religious instincts, inclined to superstition, but with tendencies, like those of his father, towards monotheism. His early experiences had given him some contacts with Christians in the East which probably resulted in a feeling of respect and possibly of friendship towards some individual members of the Church. Like his father, he showed a tolerant attitude towards the Christians in his own provinces, but this was no more than the tyrant Maxentius had done. In fact, Maxentius had already restored to the Christians some, at least, of their confiscated property. We have already seen that there is scant evidence for any definite leanings towards the acceptance of Christianity on the part of Constantius Chlorus. The mere fact that he gave to one of his daughters the name Anastasia, Resurrection, is not significant. This may have been done at the suggestion of a close friend, or may have had no particular Christian connotation in the mind of Constantius. He was probably a monotheist of devout inclinations, who, either from deliberate policy or because of his kindly nature, was more lenient to his Christian subjects than were his associates.

As the treachery of Maximian and the inevitability of a struggle with Maxentius for the supremacy of the West became more apparent, Constantine adopted a new basis for his claim to rule, as well as a new religious allegiance to supplant the relationship to Hercules and to seek divine assistance for his undertaking. The Panegyrists, who were familiar with his record in Gaul at this time, clearly represent him as a devout pagan monotheist, whose devotion is directed towards Apollo, who in Gaul was identified with Sol Invictus. Eumenius would not dare to say in praise of Constantine what would be offensive to him. Moreover Constantine's coinage of this period, with the tokens of the Sun-god, and the inscription *Soli Invicto Comiti* is conclusive. Then came the campaign against Maxentius with the certainty of tremendous risk and slight prospect of success. It was during that campaign that a profound change took place in Constantine, one that has exerted a far-reaching influence on all subsequent history.

Eusebius emphasizes the deep thoughts and reflections that were in the mind of Constantine during the progress of this campaign. The recollection of the persecution begun by Diocletian and Galerius in 303 was particularly vivid, for he had been an eye-witness of its inception at Nicomedia. He knew its later stages as it had been rigorously continued in the East. He and his father had disregarded the more stringent injunction of the edicts of persecution in the West, and their part of the Empire had enjoyed a considerable degree of prosperity and peace. Meanwhile in the East, where Galerius and Maximin Daia held sway, conditions had been quite different. Now Galerius had died a most wretched death, apparently attempting in his last moments to make some reluctant and half-hearted amends for his cruelties, by issuing a tardy Edict of Toleration. Was not that very Edict a confession of failure? Could the peace of the Empire, an end which he desired quite as earnestly as Diocletian had desired it, be attained so long as the Christians were being persecuted? These reflections undoubtedly combined to predispose his mind to a still more generous policy than that adopted by Galerius. Yet, had it been a mere matter of policy, there was far more to induce Maximin Daia to accept Christianity from the standpoint of personal interest than for Constantine to do so in the part of the Empire where its adherents were least numerous. The army was almost wholly pagan, and such a change of policy might be more than merely foolhardy; it might even be dangerous.

It would seem as though he had all to lose and nothing to gain from so radical a step. Was he sufficiently astute to realize not only that a religious unity was essential to the unity of the Empire, to enable it to withstand and survive the attacks of barbarism from within and without; but also that Christianity alone could ultimately provide a basis for such religious unity? In the light of the subsequent history of Europe that fact becomes quite patent. Only a united Europe has been able to withstand the recurring onsets of barbarism or, so far as we can see, will be able to withstand them now and in the future. A religious unity is the only kind of unity that Europe has ever been able to attain. In periods of exhaustion, if this unity has existed, recovery has been possible. Without unity of religion, when weariness has come, temporary failure has followed. It would appear to be granting Constantine an unusual gift of foresight to picture him as fully realizing this truth so obvious to us of a later day. Yet, as he compared the treatment of the Christians of the East with the methods employed towards them in the West, as he meditated on the power that made it possible for them to survive the repeated persecutions to which they had been subjected, some inkling or suggestion of this thought may have come to him.

At Rome Maxentius, although he had the larger and more powerful army, resorted to incantations and magic and sought the assistance of all the powers below as well as those above. Constantine, perhaps simply as the result of his reflections and guided by sound reasoning, perhaps yielding to a sudden impulse, decided to cast in his lot with the God of the Christians, whose followers increased in spite of ever more rigorous persecution, whose enemies were perishing ingloriously. His first conversion, as his adoption of the Sun-god has aptly been called, prepared the way for the second conversion. It was not a difficult step, now that he had adopted one God as his patron and protector, to identify that God, no longer with Apollo or Sol Invictus, but with the Unconquered God of the Christians, whose followers continued to multiply despite all the repressive measures that had been taken against them. It was probably not a very clear understanding of Christian teaching that roused him to this move, although it is possible that Hosius of Cordova may have been with his armies at this time and may have imparted to him some elementary instruction. The relation between Christ and the one God Whom he acknowledged was probably quite vague in his mind, as it was to continue to be for some time. It may have been only the God of Jewish monotheism that had supplanted Sol Invictus at first, but none the less the die was cast. He was persuaded that it was under the banner of the God of the Christians that he was to conquer.

Constantine challenged the God of the Christians to give him victory and the God of the Christians responded to the challenge. With his background and temperament it was but natural that he should expect the God, Whom he had ventured to embrace as the God of Power, to grant him a sign. He was predisposed to recognize such a sign, and it came to him. Whether or not the cross in the sky at noonday was an objective reality, he believed that it was, and having risked all on this hazardous venture, he was now ready to see it through to the end. There is no hint or suggestion that any sense of sin or weakness in himself led him to this decision. He was seeking supernatural power and he was convinced that he had discovered where that power was to be found. The sign in the sky that he saw, or was convinced that he saw, was reinforced in a dream. There he was bidden to make his allegiance to the God of the Christians visible in his army as it approached the final test. He did not hesitate. Mere inward resolution to adopt the Christians' God as his Patron to lead him to victory was not sufficient. Prayer alone, however devout, would not commit him openly to the decision he had made. His army entered the decisive battle with Maxentius, proclaiming by their outward adornment and equipment that they were fighting under the banner of the God Who was to guarantee victory. The God Whom he had espoused as all-powerful did not fail him. His conversion was complete.

This conversion did not mean necessarily a complete inward moral reformation. It did not involve a full understanding of the content of the Christian revelation. But it did mean that he had publicly declared for the Christians' God, and from that declaration he would never recede. The *labarum* indeed did not appear on his coins in all probability until 317, when it was shown with the figures of his sons Crispus and Constantine II, thus publicly declaring the adherence of his sons as well as of himself to Christianity. For a time prudence would dictate a policy of diplomacy towards his pagan subjects, who were vastly in the majority. But by progressive steps his adherence to Christianity becomes apparent in the favor shown towards his Christian subjects and the legislation which granted them special privileges and exemptions. Although he was not baptized until he realized the approach of death, though he did not even become a catechumen, the problems of the Christians and their welfare were his primary concern. Eventually he would try to establish a Christian city to govern a Christian Empire. Wisdom and discretion had governed his movements hitherto, despite the fact that he had once appeared to throw judgment to the winds and to venture all on a desperate chance, disregarding all precaution, in a moment of mental stress and religious or superstitious exaltation. Henceforth, at least until he became sole master of the Roman world, he must continue to exercise self-restraint and prudence, lest, by offending the susceptibilities of his pagan subjects he lose the highly prized unity he had sought to achieve.

Whether or not God granted Constantine a miracle, whether it was a purely subjective experience or a natural phenomenon susceptible of scientific explanation, is a question on which there will probably never be unanimity. That Constantine believed that both the vision and the dream were sent to him directly by the God Whom he had chosen as his champion cannot be denied without rejecting all the evidence that has survived. To what extent Constantine realized and accepted the implications, intellectual and moral, of his conversion is a question very difficult to decide. But of the fact of the conversion there can be no doubt. The theory that he was "a murdering egoist, whose only religion was a belief in his own conquering genius, . . . a man essentially unreligious, for whom there could be no question of Christianity or paganism"—such a theory is quite untenable unless we are to regard as spurious a large number of his letters, the authenticity of which has not been seriously questioned, and along with them many of the laws ascribed to him, and to repudiate as well a considerable part of the records of his contemporaries. A man utterly devoid of religion was difficult to find in the Roman world of the fourth century. There is abundant evidence that Constantine was of an unusually religious nature, even to the point of superstition. The effort to present Constantine as an easy-going monotheist, whose great aim was to find a sort of least common denominator as the basis for a union of pagans and Christians in a single inclusive cult—a theory which finds its justification almost solely in the evidence of his coins—utterly ignores his attitude a little later towards both schismatics and heretics among the Christians. The whole course of Constantine's activities after the defeat of Maxentius becomes inexplicable, if he never really advanced beyond the vague monotheism of his early days. To attribute his conversion to religious hysteria or to a pathological mental state produced by his own innate superstition, is extremely hazardous in the case of the most astute and able general of his day, whose practical worldly wisdom and sound judgment were evident time and again. A conversion had taken place—perhaps not such a change as conversion in the full Christian sense involves—but, after he became master of the Western part of the Empire, Constantine did finally and completely abandon paganism, and he began to throw the full force of his favor towards advancing the cause of the Church of Christ.

Chapter VIII

THE EDICT OF MILAN

There has been an abundance of discussion regarding the Edict of Milan. This has commonly been regarded as an epoch-making document, which for the first time established in the Roman Empire complete toleration for all religions. Probably no such document was actually issued from Milan. There is no evidence that it was. But the fact for which this term stands is irrefutable. We have in Lactantius and in Eusebius' History of the Church two versions of a rescript, the former in Latin, the latter in Greek, which have commonly been regarded as the Edict of Milan. Eusebius introduces the document by merely calling it a translation from the Latin tongue of the imperial decrees of Constantine and Licinius; while Lactantius states that Licinius, having made his entry into Nicomedia, returned thanks to God (for his victory over Maximin Daia, which we shall describe later), and, on the Ides of June, while he and Constantine were Consuls for the third time, commanded this edict for the restoration of the Church, directed to the President of the province, to be promulgated.

The text of this edict, as given by Eusebius, contains no introductory section, such as is given by Lactantius, and runs as follows:

"Perceiving for a long time past that religious freedom ought not to be denied, but that it ought to be granted to the judgment and desire of each individual to perform his religious duties according to his own choice, we had given orders that every man, Christians as well as others, should preserve the faith of his own sect and religion. But since in that rescript, in which such liberty was granted them, many and various conditions seemed clearly added, some of them, it may be, after a short time discarded such observance."

The conditions here referred to were undoubtedly those mentioned in the rescript of toleration of Galerius, in which it was stated that nothing was to be done contrary to discipline. We have none of his letters of instructions to his provincial officials which seem to have accompanied the toleration edict of Galerius. We may, however, be quite certain, since he referred to letters of instruction which would specify what these conditions were to be, that the toleration which he granted was hemmed about by restrictions which would limit the freedom which he granted to the Christians and render their enjoyment of it as difficult as possible. There have been various suggestions regarding the nature of these conditions. It has been thought that perhaps Galerius restricted the Christians to certain social classes and that, if a man chose to declare himself a Christian, while he would incur no particular danger, he would no longer be permitted to act as *decurion,* or to hold other public office, in the town in which he lived. Galerius may have attempted to make a closed hereditary guild of the Christians and thus make certain of their eventual extinction. He may have attempted to make the transactions by which Christians were to receive back their property financially profitable to the *fiscus*. The Christians may have been forbidden to make proselytes, or it may have been made possible for any town or district, by a vote of the majority, to prohibit the practice of the Christian religion within its borders. These are merely conjectures that have been made. Of the actual conditions we have no certain knowledge, but we may be sure that Galerius did not grant toleration to the Christians without adding restrictions that would be humiliating and onerous, if not so difficult as to make many fearful to accept it.

The document, as given by Eusebius, continues:

"When I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, came under favorable auspices to Milan and gave consideration to everything which concerned the commonweal and prosperity, we resolved among other things, or rather first of all, to make such decrees as seemed in many respects for the benefit of everyone; that is, such as should preserve reverence and piety towards the deity. We resolved, that is to say, to grant both to the Christians and to all men freedom to follow the religion which they choose, that whatever heavenly divinity exists may be propitious to us and to all who live under our government.

"We have, therefore, determined, with sound and upright purpose, that liberty is to be denied to no one, to choose and to follow the religious observances of the Christians, but that to each one freedom is to be given to devote his mind to that religion which he may think adapted to himself, so that the deity may show to us in all things his accustomed care and favor. It was fitting that we should write that this is our pleasure, that those conditions which were contained in our former letter with regard to the Christians which were sent to your devotedness now being completely abandoned, everything that seemed very severe and foreign to our mildness may be annulled, and that now everyone who has the desire to observe the religion of the Christians may do so without molestation. We have decided to communicate this most fully to your care, so that you may know that we have granted to these same Christians freedom and full liberty to observe their own religion.

"Since this has been freely granted to them by us, your devotedness realizes that liberty is granted to others also who may wish to follow their own religious observances; since it is clearly in harmony with the tranquillity of our times, that each one should have the freedom to choose and worship whatever deity he pleases. This has been done by us so that we might not seem in any way to discriminate against any rank or religion.

"And we further decree regarding the Christians, that their places, in which they were formerly accustomed to assemble, and with regard to which in the former letter sent to your devotedness a different order was given, if it appear that any have bought them either from our treasury or from any other person, these places shall be restored to the said Christians, without demanding money or any other equivalent, with care and certainty. If some persons happen to have received these places as a gift, they shall restore them as quickly as possible to these same Christians: with the understanding that if those who have bought these places, or those who have received them as a gift, demand anything from our goodness, they may go to the judge of the district, that provision may be made for them of our generosity. All these things are to be granted to the society of Christians by your care immediately and without delay.

"And since the Christians are known to have possessed not only those places in which it was their custom to assemble, but also other places, which belonged not to individuals among them, but to the society as a whole, that is, to the society of Christians, you will order that all these, in conformity to the law which we have already stated, be restored without any hesitation, to these same Christians; that is, to their society and congregation: the above-mentioned provision being of course observed, that those who restore them without price, as we have already stated, may look for remuneration from our bounty. In all these provisions for the benefit of the society of

Christians, you ought to use the utmost diligence, so that our command may be speedily executed, and that, in this also, through our generosity, provision may be made for the common weal and public tranquillity. For by this means, as we have already stated, the divine favor in our regard, which we have already experienced in many matters, will continue secure through all time. And that the terms of this our gracious ordinance may be known to all, it is expected that this which we have written, will be published everywhere by you and brought to the knowledge of all, so that it may be possible for no one to be ignorant of this provision of our generosity."

This document, issued in the name of the pagan Licinius as well as that of Constantine and, presumably in the name of the still actively persecuting Daia as well, makes use of a phrase that seems to imply a real doubt as to what gods exist or may exist, after all. Does this phrase really represent the vague agnosticism of Constantine, or indicate that he was actually attempting at this time to establish a state religion which would unite Christians and pagans in a peaceful unity? A brief consideration of his actions, his letters at this very juncture, as well as of the laws which he had already begun to enact in favor of the Christians renders such a theory untenable. The suggestion that this phrase indicates that a scribe really gave the document its form and was responsible for the introduction of this note of vagueness, although ingenious, is not convincing, for it is incredible that one in such a position should have had the temerity to give an imperial document a spirit that was directly at variance with the Emperor's intention. This phrase, "whatever heavenly divinity exists," is much more likely to be a concession on the part of Constantine to the prejudices of his colleague, Licinius, who was a pagan, and to the more militant paganism of Daia, if his name was also included. Constantine could well afford to make concessions to their prejudices so far as mere phrases were concerned, for the principles enunciated are far from showing any spirit of compromise. The privileges which the Christians are to enjoy henceforth are absolute. Not only are they to be accorded the most complete liberty in the practice of their religion, but they are to be free to make converts from any class whatsoever and their property is to be restored to them, even at the expense of the State. The use of a vague phrase with regard to who is the true divinity may be conceded to a pagan Augustus, since this is not a treatise on dogmatic religion, if thereby some of the sting may be removed from the concessions he is compelled to grant to the members of a hitherto persecuted religion.

But this document is no mere edict of toleration. It enunciates quite a new principle. It is one thing to recognize the futility of persecution. It is quite another thing to grant freedom of conscience to all men. Alexander Severus, Gallienus and Galerius ultimately had granted toleration to the Christian religion. It might under them lawfully exist. Force had proved ineffective in the effort to stamp out Christianity. Therefore the State might, though reluctantly and ungraciously, extend its protection so as to include it. But toleration is exercised only towards what is regarded as mistaken, erroneous or inferior. It in no way implies that the belief that is now tolerated is seen to be true or admirable. The disabilities of Catholics and of Unitarians were removed in England, not because the majority of people in that country were convinced that the truth was to be found in either of those religions, but because their adherents were found to be law-abiding, moral and good citizens. Most modern states tolerate beliefs widely at variance with the convictions of a majority of their citizens, because those beliefs do not engender sedition or treason, and society functions more peacefully when there is an absence of strife. The cessation of the attempt to suppress the Mormons in the United States did not come because there was any tendency to accept their peculiar tenets by the people of the country at large, but because they were found to be less dangerous than they had previously appeared once the practice of polygamy had been abandoned, and the futility of continued strife was obvious. But mere toleration can be changed into renewed persecution with amazing rapidity by apparently insignificant events, or by conditions quite beyond the control of the persecuted body, as was evident after each of the previous edicts of toleration in the Roman Empire, and has been evident many times since.

This edict was much more than an edict of toleration. It proclaimed the right of the individual conscience to give expression to its religious belief without fear of interference or repression by the State. This idea was quite unknown in the ancient world. Cicero, philosopher as he claimed to be, could not endure non-conformity with regard to the religion of the State, nor could any of the Roman philosophers of the most enlightened period imagine that it would be possible to grant equal rights to all religions. Such an idea originated, so far as society in the Roman Empire of the fourth century was concerned, with the Christians, or, at least, with certain individuals among them. Lactantius, from whom Constantine probably learned much of what he knew of the Christian religion, said "religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows, that the will may be affected . . . for nothing is so much a matter of free-will as religion, a concern in which, if the mind of the worshipper be disinclined to it, religion is at once removed, and ceases to exist." The fiery Tertullian, even after he had been infected with the Montanist heresy, wrote to Scapula, the proconsul of Carthage, "It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own convictions: one man's religion neither harms nor helps another man. It is assuredly no part of religion to compel religion—to which free-will and not force should lead us—the sacrificial victims even being required of a willing mind." Again in his Apology he had stated, "See that you do not give a further ground for the charge of irreligion, by taking away religious liberty, and forbidding free choice of deity, so that I may no longer worship according to my inclination, but am compelled to worship against it." We may be quite certain that, whatever concessions Constantine may have granted to a pagan colleague in the phraseology of this document, the spirit which it expressed could have been injected only by him and at the prompting of some one or other of his Christian associates.

But was this really the spirit of Constantine himself? At almost this very time we find him not only enacting legislation which was definitely in favor of the Christians but also concerning himself with dissensions that existed among them, and deciding which group was to be recognized and which group condemned. Ere long he will be ordering bishops to attend synods, although himself unbaptized, summoning a General Council, even submitting names of those from whom choice is to be made in the election of a bishop. More and more he will make evident his own attitude towards paganism, and will not hesitate to brand it with scornful and opprobrious terms. Perhaps it is his principle that the prevalence of error justifies establishing freedom of conscience, but that when truth predominates, the use of coercion against error is demanded. He has been hailed as the progenitor of a State-Church, which ultimately required uniform submission from all its subjects. It is, therefore, important to consider briefly just what was implied in the so-called Edict of Milan; what is really meant by religious tolerance and freedom of conscience; and, finally, what was actually the guiding principle with Constantine in the enactment and enforcement of this edict.

Hitherto religion had been a function of the State. To Cicero the very existence of the State was impossible without the fear of God, on which fidelity and justice depend. This idea has been held in later ages both by freethinkers and by Christian statesmen. In the Roman Empire it had been axiomatic. This principle was now definitely abrogated. Religion was no longer to be a concern of the State. Absolute freedom was to be permitted to all men to decide what religion was true, publicly to assert their adherence to it and to participate in its common rites and worship; to each religious group was to be allowed the right to possess property and to enjoy legal recognition by the State. In other words, one complete province of the individual's activity—and that the most important province—was henceforth to be liberated from State control and interference. Hitherto the maintenance of the unity of the State had seemed to demand drastic measures to expel or exclude those elements that did not fit into the pattern of the State-established religion. Presumably that period was now in the past. The conscience of the individual alone was to be the arbiter of his religious loyalty.

Tolerance in religion implies the existence of something generally regarded as evil or false. It implies patience and forbearance in the person or group that exercises it. Disapproval exists, but magnanimously refrains from molesting its object either publicly or privately. It implies granting to the tolerated religion the right to complete liberty of action and freedom to win converts to itself. In present-day Russia toleration is granted in theory to the Orthodox Church as well as to other groups, but they are denied the right to proclaim their message to others, while that privilege is freely granted to atheistic propaganda. Such tolerance is incomplete. It was inconceivable to the Catholic states of western Europe in the Middle Ages, when the great body of society believed in the existence of definite, objective truth which had been divinely revealed, that they should permit the propagation of such tenets as those of the Albigenses and the Cathari, which involved not only the proclamation of error in the field of revealed truth but also subversive social teachings which were a menace to the existence of both Church and State. A sharp distinction was made between those who, once baptized into her membership, had, presumably of their own free choice, elected to abandon the truth and to enter into wilful revolt against lawful authority and, on the other hand, the Jews, who had never been members of the Church, and for the same reason the pagan races in the New World, whose protection against forcible conversion and the abolition of such of their religious rites as were not openly debasing and immoral was the constant concern of the Church. The same degree of toleration and protection that was granted to the Jews could not reasonably be accorded to them. The document which we are considering contemplates no partial or incomplete toleration. Theoretically it would seem to imply that one religion is as good as another, but such an attitude as modern indifferentism in matters of religion was unknown in that age. Rather it is the recognition of two simple facts: the conscience of man cannot be forced; the unity and prosperity of the State will best be conserved when all men are devoutly offering worship to the God in whom each of them individually believes with honest conviction.

What was the principle that determined Constantine in the promulgation of this edict? He had seen the futility of force. It had proved quite incapable of exterminating the Christians or of driving them into the established religion of the Roman State. Diocletian had cared little about the belief of the Christians, had they but been willing to participate in the religious rites demanded by the State, just as Elizabeth of England had small concern with regard to how many of her subjects remained Papists at heart, if they would but conform outwardly to the church by law established. In each case it was national unity that was desired, not of necessity uniformity of religious conviction. With Galerius the cogent motive was a deep hatred of the Christian religion, which he doubtless believed to be definitely harmful to the State. With Constantine there was the certainty that the God of the Christians had led him to victory. Therefore the religion of the Christians must not merely be tolerated. It must be granted all the privileges that the other legally recognized religions enjoyed; soon it would be possible to bestow upon it more lavishly gifts and expressions of distinct favor. For the present, the pagans, who were greatly in the majority, must be handled with diplomacy. He would continue as Pontifex Maximus, but he would be merely the titular head of the State religion, exercising the functions of the office through another. The chief aim at first was that the absolute equality of Christianity with paganism in the eyes of the State should be unequivocally expressed. The State could afford to indemnify the Christians for the losses that they had suffered. Persecution had been costly for the State treasury. It might now bear the burden of expense that was demanded by justice. Hence absolute toleration was declared, and along with it was asserted the principle of freedom of conscience. Each man was to be free in theory to choose his own religion. Yet, in practice, Constantine was immediately confronted with a vexed problem that made it necessary for him to distinguish between the Catholics and the Donatists. He could no more conceive of tolerating schism within the Christian body than could the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages conceive that either justice or charity demanded toleration for those recalcitrant members who would destroy her unity and undermine her very existence. Liberty of conscience meant one thing when expressed by individual Christians in time of persecution; it meant quite another thing to an emperor of the Roman Empire, accustomed traditionally to dominate and to dictate, when the unity of the very religion he had espoused was in jeopardy. This principle was not to find such explicit statement again until it was set forth many centuries later by Catholic colonists in Maryland. Probably Constantine accepted it as a noble and inspiring theory. In practice it would prove impossible for a Roman Emperor.

Many problems have arisen in connection with the edict which we have been considering. It has been stated that it is not an edict; that it was not issued by Constantine; that it was not put forth at Milan; and that it did not grant legal toleration to the Christians of the whole Empire, for that they were already enjoying in a large part of the West. It surely granted the Christians quite a different degree of toleration from that accorded them by the Edict of Galerius. This edict was obviously the achievement of Constantine, for it is inconceivable that the mentally inferior Licinius or the militantly pagan Maximin Daia (who knew nothing about it until it was communicated to him), could have conceived anything in the spirit of this document. If Daia's name was added to it when it was promulgated, that was done merely in conformity with the established usage. In fact, the references to unfavorable restrictions in an earlier decree probably refer to the duplicity of Daia, quite as much as to the irritating directions which undoubtedly accompanied the decree of Galerius. Probably the document as given in Lactantius was the form in which it was promulgated in Bithynia by Licinius, while that in Eusebius is a translation of the form in which it was later promulgated in Palestine. Both of these documents unquestionably express the decisions reached by Constantine and

Licinius in conference at Milan. Whether or not their decisions were set forth in an edict at that time is a matter of no vital importance. The principles set forth in both these documents, as promulgated in different parts of the East, were decided by the conference at Milan. It is, then, no serious misstatement to continue to use the title which has been honored by centuries of association with the principles which it embodies. We are now in a position to attempt to describe Constantine's actions with regard to the Christians immediately after his conversion and his triumphal entry into Rome.

After being hailed as Senior Augustus by the Senate, he probably first exercised his authority by sending an order to Maximin Daia to cease persecuting the Christians in the East. As we have already seen there is no evidence that he issued a new decree of toleration at this time, for there was no need for it. He did, however, write very shortly to Anullinus, the proconsul in Africa, bidding him restore all property that had formerly belonged to the Catholic Church, regardless of who might be holding it at this time. This restoration was to include gardens, buildings, or any sort of property whatsoever. At the same time he wrote to Caecilianus, the Catholic bishop of Carthage, to tell him that he had already made provision for distributing funds among the Catholics of Africa, Numidia and Mauretania. These letters show quite clearly that he at once recognized a distinction between the Catholic clergy and those who adhered to the Donatist schism, which had been raging in Africa since the election of Caecilianus in the preceding year. He expressed his opinion of the schism in no uncertain terms, branding it as a vain seduction. These letters were probably sent by him from Rome by the hand of Hosius of Cordova. A little later, probably at about the time that he had his meeting with Licinius at Milan, he sent another letter to Anullinus with the order that henceforth the Catholic clergy were to be freed from all public duties to the State, that they may not "by any error or sacrilegious negligence be drawn away from the service due to the Deity, but may devote themselves without any hindrance to their own law." The reason that he assigns for this exemption, which is expressed unequivocally to the imperial governor, is this: "Because it appears from many considerations that when that religious worship in which reverence for the most holy Heavenly Power is preserved, is disregarded, great dangers have been brought upon the State, but when that religious observance has been legally resumed and observed, there has resulted the greatest good fortune to the Roman name and remarkable felicity to all human affairs." In this thought we see the same concern for the peace and prosperity of the State that is looked for as the result of the general tolerance granted in the document, called the Edict of Milan, but with the additional thought that the clergy of the Catholic Church, whose God has given him victory over his enemy, are upholders of the fortunes of the Roman State. His attitude is already one, not of mere tolerance, but of dependence and reciprocal favor.

Then in February of 313 Constantine and Licinius met at Milan, where the marriage of Licinius to Constantine's sister Constantia took place. The story is related by Aurelius Victor that they sent an invitation to the aged Diocletian to be present at the ceremony. When the retired Augustus replied in a dignified letter, pleading his ill-health as the reason for his inability to accept the invitation, they are reported to have sent back an indignant and threatening letter in which they accused Diocletian of always being a partisan of Maximin Daia. This letter is said to have caused Diocletian to cease to care to live, and to have resulted in his starving himself to death. There is no other evidence that such a letter was sent or that Constantine was in any way responsible for the death of Diocletian.

We shall see soon that there were far more weighty matters to bring sorrow to his declining years than a mere affront from Constantine and Licinius expressed in a letter of rebuke. These years must, however, have been filled with misgivings for Diocletian in his retirement, as he learned from a distance the disorders that his system had produced and the changed attitude of the State towards the Christians.

This meeting at Milan provided an opportunity for conference between Constantine and Licinius regarding their religious policy. Agreement was reached regarding the complete freedom that was to be granted to the Christians, the legal rights that were to be accorded them, the restoration of their property, as well as the idea of the right of each individual to choose his own religion. Without doubt the text of an edict which was to be published by Licinius on his return to the East was settled. That text, whether or not it was actually put forth in definite form at Milan, was what actually constituted the Edict of Milan. It may not have reached definite form at this meeting, but its principles were settled there, and the fact for which the Edict of Milan has stood for so long is beyond question. Licinius was to set forth for the East to publish the good news to the Christians in those provinces.

While agreement regarding religious policy was achieved in the meeting at Milan, apparently there were differences regarding jurisdiction and prerogatives that were not so easily adjusted. It was arranged that the Empire should be divided between Constantine and Licinius and this involved degrading Maximin Daia from his position as Senior Augustus. Constantine was now recognized as Senior Augustus, but only on the condition that Licinius should retain the right to legislate in his own part of the Empire. Constantine also required his sister Constantia to adopt an illegitimate son of Licinius, so that he might have a possible successor. The army of Maxentius was divided between them, but the disposition of Italy and the adjacent provinces presented apparently insuperable difficulties. This knotty problem had not yet been settled when the deliberations were brought to a sudden close by a rebellion of Frankish tribes which recalled Constantine to the Rhine, while the aggressions of Maximin Daia made it imperative that Licinius lose no time in proceeding to the East.

Within a few months Constantine had successfully repressed the uprising of the Franks and had already begun that series of benefactions to the Church which was to continue through the remainder of his reign. The "Totalitarian" principle of Diocletian had been abandoned, but although Constantine had exempted religion from the interference of the State, he would, in return, expect the Christian element in the Empire to assume an increasing share in carrying out his imperial policies in departments other than that of religion. To facilitate this change, he began at once to enact laws that were the clear expression of his purpose to make the position of the Church a favored one. Not only were the clergy released from the payment of all contributions to the State, but the Church as a whole was relieved from the obligation to pay both *annona* and *tributum*. He also began a series of gifts to the Church by presenting to the Pope the Lateran Palace, which had come into his possession through his wife, Fausta. Whether or not this was intended to be a permanent gift, such it has remained. Later in this very year Pope Miltiades presided there over a conference assembled to settle the matter of the Donatist schism in Africa. Either in connection with the palace, or from a part of it, were constructed the basilica and baptistery, the former of which, although now showing no traces of the original structure, has been known through the succeeding centuries as "St. John in the Lateran, mother and head of all the Churches of the city and of the world."

Chapter IX

CONSTANTINE AND THE SCHISM IN THE CHURCH

When constantine persuaded Licinius at Milan to unite with him in granting freedom to the Church and to recognize the right of each individual person in the Empire to choose and to practise the religion that seemed to him to be true, he felt, no doubt, that he was taking an important step towards the realization of internal peace. Little did he realize that among the Christians themselves he would almost immediately encounter strife and divisions, even bitter hatred quite as violent as any that he had hitherto known in the long conflict between pagans and Christians. He was at once confronted by a problem such as none of his predecessors had had to meet. In espousing the cause of the Christians and declaring his allegiance to their God, he found it necessary at once to discriminate between the main body of believers and those who had separated themselves from that body.

The violent North African temperament was constantly prone to develop strife and faction, to demand extreme asceticism and to condemn with vehemence those who did not conform to the abnormal standards demanded by the rigorist groups. A century earlier Tertullian had been typical of this temper. Discontented with what he chose to regard as laxity among his fellow Christians, he had abandoned the Church for the heresy of the Montanists and had proceeded to lash the Catholics with, if anything, more intense and more bitter violence than he had previously applied to pagans. To him, as to many of the perfervid, fanatical North Africans, any contact with the world involved contamination. The Empire represented all that was most evil in the world. "The emperors would have believed in Christ, had it not been that emperors were necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars." Such was his doctrine. Not only are the Empire and the powers of this world alien to God, but they are His enemies. No reconciliation is possible between the oath of allegiance to God and that which is taken to man. It is impossible to serve both God and Caesar. This was Tertullian's verdict. Could Caesar be a Christian? Constantine was to learn to his great sorrow that, while an Emperor might give his allegiance to God and might seek His help, the way of an emperor who professed to be a Christian would not be an easy one. Of course, we cannot know just how fully Constantine grasped the significance of the revelation he professed to have accepted or to what extent he realized its implications, but, as Caesar, he was to learn the difficulties that would be inevitable for the first ruler of the Roman Empire who claimed to be a Christian. Tertullian had been an unbalanced extremist, but the incompatibility between the office of the Emperor and the obligations of a servant of Christ, the problems that would beset the path of the first man who attempted to reconcile the two vocations, the obstacles that would present themselves to a monarch who demanded absolute loyalty from his servants when he declared his own allegiance to a higher loyalty—these were sufficiently real to demand every gift, both mental and moral, that Constantine possessed. No predecessor had encountered these same problems and obstacles. It was impossible to learn from established precedents or from the experience of others. If Constantine made mistakes in dealing with the Donatists, it is but just to realize that intelligence and devotion all but superhuman would have been required to travel over so hazardous a road without any errors of judgment or evidences of human fallibility.

The same violent uncompromising traits that had been evident in Tertullian had at this time produced divisions among the Christians of the provinces of North Africa. The tendency to demand a more rigorous asceticism and a more complete detachment from the concerns of the world than is possible for the rank and file of Christians can produce a most unlovely type of Puritanism, one that in turn engenders the most detestable manifestations of spiritual pride, bigoted intolerance and diabolical hypocrisy. Such had in fact been its fruits among some of the less worthy members of the Church in North Africa. Far from blameless themselves, they arrogated to themselves the privilege of sitting in judgment on other members of the Church whom they chose to characterize as renegades. Their own guilt took refuge in making claim to superior virtue, which would not bear the light of investigation; and in a policy of exclusiveness which refused to associate with those who, in their own arbitrary judgment, were lax.

The persecution under Diocletian had produced a new situation. Those who had surrendered the Sacred Books of the Church, when they were demanded by the civil authorities, won for themselves the unenviable name of *traditors*. Those who suffered imprisonment for being Christians acquired the honorable name of *confessors*. Many Christians had been guilty of apostasy. Others had compromised, rendering some degree of obedience to the commands of the government, but not completely abandoning the religion of Christ. Others had found clever means for evading or circumventing the orders issued by the authorities of the State. All of these classes demanded wise and thoughtful treatment after the cessation of the persecution. Were they to be cut off for all time from all association with the

Church? Might they be reconciled after a period of severe penance? Must that penance be sustained during the remainder of their lives, and could their restitution be effected only at the point of death? These were some of the problems created by the intense persecution inaugurated under Diocletian, and they demanded solution as soon as that persecution came to an end.

Among the more fanatical North Africans there had been many who had courted persecution and martyrdom, a practice that was not countenanced by the Catholic Church. Some, whose immoral lives were a scandal to the Church, saw the opportunity in martyrdom at once to redeem themselves and to win acclaim. Hence they provoked the judges to put them to death. Others found their opportunity in the reverence that was accorded the *confessors* by their fellow Christians and in the charitable ministrations that were provided for them during the time of their imprisonment. An easy and well-provided living, combined with renown and adulation, was sufficient allurement to induce some men voluntarily to endure imprisonment. It is obvious that both those who demanded martyrdom for themselves and those who wished to purchase fame and a comfortable living by electing to become *confessors* were fanatical, immoral, or deplorably weak members of the Church.

The persecution in North Africa was of short duration as compared with that in other parts of the Empire. For a little more than a year it raged furiously. Then the government ceased to disturb the Christians and, by the end of the second year, it became possible for them to assemble in small numbers and even to proceed to choose successors for the bishops whose sees were vacant. Maxentius had really brought the persecution to an end and the Edict of Galerius gave the Christians the status of a lawful religion. Now, with the victory of Constantine, confiscated property was restored and distinct favor was being shown those who had so recently been persecuted. Yet, brief as the persecution was in North Africa, it had produced bitter dissension among the vehement people of these provinces and had bequeathed to the Church a schism that was destined to endure for a century.

The Donatist schism had its origin in the election of a successor to Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage. Mensurius had been no fanatic and had been gifted with ingenuity which gave great offence to the zealous. When Anullinus, the proconsul of Africa, demanded the Sacred Books, he resorted to the "pious fraud" of hiding the Holy Scriptures and giving up in their stead some "worthless writings of heretics." This had taken place in 303, the first year of the persecution. He had also refused to endorse the action of those who had asked for martyrdom by coming forward and saying: "We have books; but we refuse to give them up." The men who did this seem to have been worthless and violent members of the Church who thought thereby to win glory for themselves and to enjoy the food and dainties that sympathetic Christians were able to pass through the prison-gates to the brave confessors. In refusing to approve the actions of those who thus courted martyrdom Mensurius had acted in conformity with the practice of the Catholic Church. Then, when Mensurius himself was summoned to court for having sheltered a deacon accused of sedition, he deposited the sacred vessels of his Church with some officials, at the same time leaving a list of them with an old woman, and instructing her that, if he did not return, the sacred vessels were to be handed on to his successor. He did not return; for, although he was able to prove to the satisfaction of Maxentius his innocence with regard to the charges made against him, he died on the return journey before reaching home.

His deacon, Caecilianus, was immediately chosen as his successor. The choice of Caecilianus provoked at once a violent outburst. There had been nothing irregular about the election of Caecilianus or his consecration, but the forces of disappointed ambition and obvious fraud united to contest his consecration, which had been performed by Felix, Bishop of Aptunga, and two neighboring bishops. Secundus of Tigisis claimed the right, as senior bishop of Numidia, to consecrate the Bishop of Carthage and proceeded to consecrate a rival bishop to Caecilianus. Two priests, Botrus and Celestius, who had cherished ambitions to secure the episcopal office, became the leaders of an opposition party, which accused Caecilianus of being a *traditor* and a persecutor of the saints. This party later transferred their charges to Felix of Aptunga, whom they accused of being a *traditor*.

Up to this point they had created a schism by opposing a rival bishop to the lawfully chosen and consecrated bishop of Carthage. They soon justified their opposition by introducing a new and strange doctrine to the effect that the ministrations of a *traditor* are null and void and that a church that has communion with a *traditor* is apostate. The opposition party grew through the adherence to it of the officers of the Church to whom the sacred vessels had been entrusted. They had apparently decided to be unfaithful to the trust committed to them and, when the list of the vessels, in compliance with the instructions of Mensurius, was turned over to Caecilianus, they naturally became enemies of the new bishop. Most powerful of all those who joined this clique was a woman of high rank, wealthy and powerful, named Lucilla, whom Caecilianus had once rebuked for extraordinary and unauthorized devotions. It had been her practice to kiss a bone, which she claimed was that of a martyr, before receiving Communion. Such a woman, capricious and self-willed in her piety and vindictive by nature, was qualified to be a most potent force among a group of malcontents.

This opposition party, which came later to be known as the

Donatists, refused to recognize Caecilianus as Bishop of Carthage and ere long added to their numbers Secundus of Tigisis and some of his Numidian bishops. These bishops from Numidia, as was made evident at a council which they held a little later, in 305, were violent, lawless men, savage in their relations with one another, and determined to cover, by mutual agreement, the fact that they all had themselves been *traditors*. This council of the Numidian bishops was held at Cirta, which was a little later called Constantine in honor of the Emperor. It is to be hoped that the accounts of this council that have come down to us are greatly exaggerated, but St. Augustine calls those who attended it "impious and sacreligious thieves" and, after every possible allowance for exaggeration has been made, the Numidian bishops still emerge as turbulent and vindictive men who were determined to whitewash their own offenses by assuming an attitude of righteous horror towards all other *traditors*. Yet despite their violence and the fact that some at least among them were guilty of crime, they seem to have been able to hide their true nature at Carthage and to have presented a fair outward appearance.

Caecilianus was in possession of the churches of Carthage when, shortly after the victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine wrote to Anullinus, the proconsul, regarding the restoration of the property of the Church and the exemption of the clergy from public duties. About the same time he wrote directly to Caecilianus granting a gift of money towards the support of the clergy of the "legitimate and most holy Catholic religion." It is obvious that the divisions in the African Church were already known to him, for he makes a clear distinction and limits his gifts to the Catholics and excludes the schismatics. This he makes quite clear by saying: "Since I have learned that some men of unsettled mind wish to turn the people from the most holy Catholic Church by a vain and illegitimate folly, know that I have commanded Anullinus, the proconsul, and also Patricius, vicar of the prefects, when they were present, that they should give proper attention not only to other matters but also above all to this, and that they should not overlook such a thing when it happened. Wherefore if you should see any such men continuing in this folly, go without delay to the above-mentioned judges and report the matter to them; that they may correct them as I commanded them when they were present."

It is obvious at once that Constantine has constituted himself the champion of the Catholic Church and is determined to repress divisions among Christians. The liberty of conscience promised at almost this very time is difficult to practise when recalcitrant members of one religion become factious and violent. Should Constantine be accused of abandoning at once the very principle that he had enunciated? Could he justly be expected to permit one group within a religious body to stir up strife and separate itself from the majority? It is difficult to see how he could have acted very differently from the way that he did in such a situation.

It was only a few months after the victory of the Milvian Bridge that the malcontents, protesting against Constantine's discrimination in favor of Caecilianus and the Catholics, appealed to him to appoint judges from Gaul—where the lenient interpretation of the edicts of persecution had provided no opportunities for the appearance of *traditors*—to settle the dispute that had arisen. In April, 313, the proconsul was accosted on the street in Carthage by a throng of people who presented him with two documents, one of which was sealed, while the other was not. The first document was labelled: "Complaints of the Catholic Church against Caecilianus, presented by the party of Majorinus." The other was the petition to Constantine.

It was a difficult problem that now presented itself to the Emperor who had declared himself a Christian and had espoused the cause of the Catholic Church and its bishop. Apparently his first thought on accepting the appeal of the malcontents was to appoint a small court to hear and decide the case. It was probably his intention that this court should consist of the Pope Miltiades, three bishops from Gaul and the archdeacon of Rome. Constantine wrote to the Pope and to Marcus, who was evidently a priest of Rome and probably the archdeacon. In his letter he describes it as very grievous to him that in those provinces which divine Providence has entrusted to his care there should be found a large number of persons who are pursuing a course of folly and separating into two parties, and that bishops are at variance with one another. He desires the Pope and Marcus, together with the three Gallic bishops, Retecius of Autun, Maternus of Colonia Agrippina (Cologne), and Marinus of Arles, whom he has bidden to come to Rome with all haste, to hear the case of Caecilianus together with ten bishops who oppose him and ten bishops to speak in his defense. Constantine assures the Pope and Marcus of his reverence for the lawfully established Catholic Church, which is so deep that it will not permit him to leave schism or division in any place. The Pope converted Constantine's court of trial into a council by adding fourteen Italian bishops. In future this would be Constantine's method when difficulties arose, and we shall soon find him summoning a council.

The charge that had been made by the group of malcontents against Caecilianus was that his consecration was invalid, since he had been consecrated by Felix of Aptunga who, they claimed, was a *traditor*. Obviously this charge involved two questions. Was it a fact that Felix was a *traditor?* Was it sound doctrine to assert that, even if Felix were proved to have been a *traditor,* his action in consecrating another bishop was therefore invalid? The opponents of Caecilianus, in a council of some seventy bishops, had assumed an affirmative reply to these questions, had further accused Caecilianus of having prevented the taking of food to the confessors in prison, and, ignoring him as the lawful Bishop of Carthage, had presumed to choose in his place Majorinus, the chaplain of Lucilla. Thus, before the communications were sent to Constantine, the schism was already complete.

It was Constantine's hope that the council which met under the presidency of Pope Miltiades might heal the schism immediately. It was destined, however, to be but the first of five investigations which extended over a period of seven years, at the end of which he had still failed to accomplish his purpose. This council met in October of 313 in the Lateran palace, which belonged to the Empress Fausta and had now been either loaned or given to Pope Miltiades. It lasted for three days. Donatus, bishop of Casae Nigrae, conducted the prosecution, but his witnesses admitted that they knew nothing against Caecilianus. On the second day they failed to appear. On the third day the Pope and the council gave their judgment in favor of Caecilianus. This council had included the very bishops whom the party of Majorinus had requested, yet they protested against its decisions. Constantine, disappointed in his expectation that the division would be automatically settled after the Council at Rome, now decided to summon a larger and more representative council. We have the letter which he sent to Aelafius, who was probably his vicar in Africa, in which he sets forth his plans for this council, expressing his eagerness for its settlement "because it provides an opportunity for those who turn their minds away from this most holy religion to criticize." He speaks with a certain freedom from reserve, for, he says, he knows that Aelafius is himself a worshipper of the most High

God. In this spontaneous expression of his personal feeling we are able to see something of Constantine's attitude towards the religion he has so recently adopted and of his own conception of his function in relation to it.

"I regard it as in no way right," he continues, "that strifes and altercations of this sort should be hidden from me, as a result of which, perhaps, the Supreme Deity may be moved, not only against the human race, but also against myself, to whose care He has by his heavenly decree entrusted the direction of all human concerns, so that, roused to wrath, He may decree otherwise than hitherto. For then shall I be able to hope actually and to the fullest extent to abide free from anxiety, and may also hope always for what is best and most prosperous from the ever-ready favor of the most powerful God, when I shall realize that all men united in brotherly harmony are worshipping the Most Holy God with the worship of the Catholic religion which is rightfully His."

Both Caecilianus and Donatus were detained for a time in Italy after the council at Rome. Immediately on their return to Carthage fresh disturbances broke out. In the meantime two Italian bishops had been sent to Carthage to act as peacemakers and to make it quite clear to the congregations in Africa which was the Catholic Church. It was the Church that was diffused throughout the world and there could be no appeal from the judgment of the nineteen bishops assembled in Rome under Pope Miltiades. The followers of Donatus, however, replied that a council such as they had held, which had consisted of ninety bishops, could certainly render a more sacred verdict than could a council of only nineteen.

The Donatists had failed utterly in the charges that they had made against Caecilianus. The accusations were now shifted to Felix of Aptunga, and these became the real basis of the attack on Caecilianus. In accordance with Constantine's directions a public investigation of the case of Felix of Aptunga was now conducted. The proceedings of this enquiry have survived. It was shown quite clearly that Felix had delivered no books to the *duumvir* during the persecution; that he had not been present in Aptunga at that time, nor had he compromised with his conscience, but had been a godly bishop. Ingentius, an *aedile's* clerk, out of malice towards Felix, had, some years ago, been guilty of forgery in an attempt to ruin the character of Felix. Ingentius now confessed his guilt and was summoned to appear before Constantine.

The Emperor now summoned a council which met at Arles in August, 314. Constantine directed that Caecilianus, together with some of his supporters and some of his opponents and some bishops from each of the African provinces, be sent to Arles by the public posting service. Eusebius has preserved the letter that the Emperor sent to Chrestus, Bishop of Syracuse, a specimen of those which he sent to a number of bishops, summoning them to be present at Arles. In this letter he refers to the effort he has already made to have the persistent and incessant disputing settled in the presence of the Pope at Rome. Since some are unwilling to conform to the judgment already given and assert that those who gave the decisions were few in number, or that they were too hasty in expressing their judgment, he has now determined that this dissension, which ought ere this to have ceased, should now be brought to an end in the presence of many. He is, therefore, asking a number of bishops from various places to attend this council, so that this shameful strife may now be settled and harmony be restored. He is particularly disturbed because these abominable divisions are giving occasion for ridicule to those who are outside the Church.

Constantine exhibits patience beyond what one would expect to find in an emperor accustomed to command, in the face of a group of factious and insubordinate trouble-makers, whom he knew to be in the wrong and who should, ere this, have been silenced. But, in failing to regard the council over which the Pope presided as final, and in assuming to summon a more representative council on his own authority, the Emperor had not only established a new precedent to replace the traditional custom of the past, but he had also opened the way for a long series of troubles for himself.

We do not know exactly how many bishops attended the Council of Arles. At all events, it was thoroughly representative of the West, and among its members were three bishops from the Church in Britain. The case of Caecilianus was investigated afresh. He was again exonerated and his accusers were condemned or repudiated. The charges against Felix of Aptunga, which had already been examined and found false, were likewise dismissed. The account of the proceedings of the council ends abruptly by saying that Constantine "became weary of the business then and bade the bishops return to their sees. Amen." One cannot but sympathize with the sorely tried Emperor. It is of interest to know that the council at Arles found time to consider some other matters in addition to the charges made by the Donatists. The decree of the Council of Elvira was revised, now making it lawful for Christians to hold civil office without in any way affecting their position in the Church, but with the reservation that, "when they begin to act contrary to discipline [which would seem to mean "when they participate in pagan ceremonies"] then, at length, they are to be debarred from communion." The restriction with regard to military service seems to have been removed, but the terms of this decree are ambiguous. It is stated that "those who cast down their arms even in time of peace [which would appear to refer to acts like those of Maximilian and Marcellus] are to be excommunicated."

Now, to the utter disgust of Constantine, the Donatists refused to accept the ruling of the Council of Arles and appealed from its decisions to the Emperor himself. He made another serious mistake in consenting to hear their appeal. In the meantime there were other matters of pressing importance to claim his attention. His first war with Licinius began in the autumn of 314 and Constantine was unable to leave the Danubian provinces until the summer of 315. When he returned to Rome in July, 315, the Donatist bishops petitioned him that they might be allowed to return to Africa. He at first consented and had selected those who were to hear the case in Africa in the hope that thus a final settlement might be reached, but fearing violent Donatist interference which might produce a decision displeasing to the heavenly divinity and harmful to his own reputation, he reversed his decision. He summoned Caecilianus to the court and promised the Donatists that, could they prove one single charge against Caecilianus in his presence, it would be with him as though they had established all their accusations. Caecilianus seems not to have arrived in Rome until after Constantine had left for Milan. There, after the arrival of Caecilianus, the Emperor was quite ready to hear the case, but the Donatists attempted to escape from the city. Then Philumenus, a supporter of Donatus, made the suggestion that both Caecilianus and Donatus be detained in Italy and that during their absence a new bishop might be chosen and consecrated for Carthage. This plan appealed to Constantine, who felt that, with both bishops under his control, it would be possible for him to send two bishops, Eunomius and Olympius, to Carthage to arrange for the consecration of a new bishop and thus, at length, establish peace in the disordered province. The arrival of the mission of the Emperor was the signal for renewed violence at Carthage, and the unhappy emissaries had no choice but to abandon their task and return to Italy, after solemnly declaring that "that is the Catholic Church which is spread throughout the whole world and that the judgment pronounced by the nineteen bishops some time ago cannot be annulled." Soon Donatus escaped and Caecilianus, who had been detained at Brixia (Brescia), followed him to Carthage.

Constantine was at Treves when the news of the escape of the two bishops and of their return to Carthage, already in a state of turmoil, reached him. He now saw no solution but to hear the case in person, as he had already agreed to do. The Donatist bishops were sent back to Africa, where for a time their faction was to be unmolested by the civil authorities, and whither the Emperor would himself come in person to instruct the Christians of Africa regarding the kind of worship that was owing to the deity. Those who failed to worship the Supreme God with the reverence that is due Him the Emperor will destroy and scatter. It is obvious that Constantine's temper has been sorely tried and his patient endurance is all but exhausted.

It was not until November, 316, that the fourth investigation was at length held at Milan. Caecilianus, who was present, was once more cleared of all charges. Constantine wrote to the Vicar of Africa that he had found Caecilianus "a man entirely blameless, and one who fulfilled the duties of his religion." He seems to have considered condemning the troublesome Donatists to death, but was probably dissuaded from doing so by Hosius of Cordova. Their churches were confiscated and the offenders were sentenced to exile. A period of military repression began while the Donatists rejoiced in being able to play the rôle of martyrs. The account of the first eviction of Donatists has survived. No blood was shed, but the soldiers installed themselves in the church and indulged in rioting and debauchery. At another church the Donatists were attacked and beaten. In a third several persons seem to have been killed.

Yet these measures were quite without effect. The Donatists addressed a memorial to the Emperor in which they declared that they would never communicate with "that scoundrelly bishop of his." Constantine, utterly exhausted with the ineffectiveness of his measures, recalled the sentence of exile and left the offenders, by what St. Augustine calls "most shameful weakness," to the judgment of God.

Among those who returned from exile was the successor of Majorinus, another Donatus (not Donatus of Casae Nigrae), the leader from whom the members of the schism later took their name. Almost immediately on the death of Majorinus it became known that one of his consecrators, Silvanus by name, had himself been a *traditor*. The groundless charges that the Donatists had made against Caecilianus and his consecrator were actually true of their accusers.

A final investigation was made at Thamugada, now called Timgad in Algiers, in 320, by order of the Emperor, in the course of which what had actually taken place during the persecution in 303 was disclosed in the presence of the Consular Zenophilus. Not only had Silvanus been a *traditor,* but he had afterwards been consecrated bishop of Cirta by Secundus, and other members of the outrageous council of the bishops of Numidia that was held at Cirta in 305. In that gathering, where still more revolting crimes had been revealed, the bishops had mutually agreed to say nothing more about the sin of being a *traditor,* for not one of their entire number was innocent of this offence. Later Silvanus had assisted at the consecration of Majorinus.

The spread of the schism to other parts of North Africa has no immediate concern for us. In other provinces the Donatists were not recognized by members of the Catholic Church. But, inexplicable as it may seem, Donatus himself appears to have been an unusual man who ruled with a high hand the motley following that continued to glory in their boast of superiority to the Catholic Church. In Numidia the schism became so numerous that its members were able to make life very difficult for the Catholics of the province. The Emperor had hoped that by ceasing to concern himself with a troublesome group that was already ostracised by all the other Christians he might ultimately win them by kindness. Such measures proved all too mild. The Donatists seized by force a church that Constantine had built for the Catholics of the city that now bore his name, the city of the notorious Silvanus. The Emperor found himself obliged to build still another church for the Catholics there. In Numidia the Donatists even succeeded in depriving the Catholic clergy of the immunity Constantine had granted them. Once more the Emperor found it necessary to take definite measures.

Although Constantine, after his repeated efforts to appease the Donatists, decided to leave the Catholics of Africa to their fate, he none the less continued to preach to them about the duty of showing forgiveness to their enemies. He has been accused by the pagan historians of showing a deplorable weakening of moral fibre and a general deterioration of character after he espoused the cause of the Christians. During the years that immediately followed his declaration for the Christian religion he seems at least to have exhibited exemplary forbearance. The Donatists became increasingly violent and ere long called to their aid the *Circumcelliones,* a mendicant socialist sect, frequently mere highwaymen and marauders, who defied the civil authorities to make martyrs of them; agrarian fanatics, probably Berbers, who scoured the country armed with clubs and shouting *Deo Laudes,* pillaging farms, setting tenants against landlords, slaves against masters, debtors against creditors, and constantly committing deeds of violence that made the very foundations of society unsafe.

Constantine had made a fundamental error in departing from the traditional appeal to Rome to substitute for it the authority of a council constituted by himself, and then in attempting to pronounce judgment himself when the decisions of his council proved ineffective. The Donatists by resisting the decisions of the Pope and his council as well as those of the Emperor were obviously rebels against the civil authority as well as the ecclesiastical. We cannot be surprised that St. Augustine ultimately, though with reluctance, approved the use of coercion to "compel them to come in," convinced by its fruits that such an exercise of authority was justified. Caesar discovered at the outset that it was not an easy thing for him to be a Christian.

Chapter X

CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS

After the sudden breaking up of the conference of Milan, which had failed to produce a satisfactory agreement regarding the administration of Italy and the adjoining provinces, Licinius proceeded in haste to meet the advancing army of Maximin Daia. Throughout the entire contest between Constantine and Maxentius, Maximin Daia had made no slightest move to assist his ally. Now, however, he made it quite evident that this inaction was because of no friendly feeling for either Constantine or Licinius. His apparent compliance with the provisions of the edict of Galerius had lasted but a few months, after which he introduced more thoroughgoing measures against the Christians. He made no open remonstrance at his degradation from the position of Senior Augustus, and again made a show of permitting Christian worship, probably to avoid any immediate opposition on the part of Constantine to his designs against Licinius. He had had two military expeditions in the preceding year, in one of which he had rid Caria of the plundering raids of robber bands who had caused a famine there by their depredations, in the other he had suffered defeat at the hands of the Armenians, who came to the aid of their kinsmen in Lesser Armenia, when he tried to suppress Christianity there. Now, with a large army that had had recent military experience, he saw his opportunity to strike at Licinius while Constantine was fully occupied on the Rhine.

With this army, which numbered perhaps 70,000, he made his way across the snows in the mountains of Asia Minor, regardless of the suffering it involved for his men. Thence he proceeded through Bithynia, while Licinius was still at Milan, and seized the opportunity to besiege Byzantium, while Constantine was engaged in Gaul. Byzantium fell after a siege of eleven days. Daia's next objective was Heraclea. Soon Licinius arrived with an army probably less than half as large as that of Daia. He reached Adrianople while Daia was still engaged in besieging Heraclea. The two armies advanced to meet one another and encamped only a few miles apart. On this occasion, we are told by Lactantius, Licinius was taught by an angel in a dream a prayer which he was to recite together with his whole army before entering the conflict, while Daia is reported as vowing to Jupiter that, should he grant him the victory, he would exterminate and utterly blot out the very name of the Christians. The parallel with Constantine's dream, as well as the fact that the prayer suggests the one which Eusebius reports as prescribed by Constantine for the use of his soldiers, both being sufficiently vague to be possible for both pagans and Christians to use, cast serious doubts on the trustworthiness of the narrative. Apparently it seemed to Lactantius that Licinius was approaching a decisive contest between Christianity and paganism. But Licinius never was a Christian in any sense. It will be seen a little later that he was but too ready to revert to the persecution of the Christians, once his enmity towards Constantine came to the surface. The scene, however, as described by Lactantius, is too dramatic to omit.

On awakening from his dream Licinius at once dictated to one of his secretaries the prayer that had been taught him. It was as follows:

"God most High, we beseech Thee; Holy God we beseech Thee. Unto Thee we commend all justice; unto Thee we commend our safety; unto Thee we commend our empire. By

Thee we live; by Thee we gain victory and happiness. Most High and Holy God, hear our prayers. To Thee we stretch out our arms. Hear us, Most High and Holy God."

This prayer, which carried with it the promise of victory, was hastily copied and distributed among the various officers, with instructions that they should teach its words to their soldiers so that they might recite it perfectly. When the two armies advanced towards one another to engage in battle, suddenly a command was given and a halt was made by the army of Licinius. Then in the barren and open plain, within sight of the enemy, Licinius, his officers, and his soldiers, all removed their helmets, stretched forth their hands towards heaven and recited in unison these musical words with their impressive repetitions. As the murmur of the voices reciting this prayer replete with power was carried to the ears of Maximin Daia's soldiers, doomed to destruction, one wonders if the realization of their fate was borne in upon them. Three times the ceremony was repeated, and each time the soldiers of Licinius resumed their shields and helmets and advanced. The prayer was so happily vague that each officer and soldier might identify the Most High and Holy God with whatever divinity he regarded as supreme. To Lactantius there was no question but that He was the God of the Christians; but to those who recited the prayer He may have been Jupiter or Mithras or Apollo.

Then the two emperors advanced to confer with one another, but no agreement could be reached. Maximin Daia scorned Licinius, convinced that the troops of his adversary would soon abandon him, disgusted with his niggardly gifts, and would enter the service of one more lavish. Lactantius is quite convinced that Maximin Daia began the war with the anticipation that this would happen, and intending, thus reinforced by the troops of Licinius, to proceed without delay to attack Constantine. But Daia's army, although far larger than that of

Licinius, was exhausted from fatigue and exposure and fell away in confusion at the first onslaught, offering almost no resistance. It was ignominious that an army superior both in numbers and in quality should be mowed down by forces vastly inferior. Daia, driven to a frenzy by this humiliation, cast aside his purple and made his escape in the disguise of a slave. He hastily crossed the Bosphorus and took refuge at Nicomedia. Half his army is reported to have perished; the other half either surrendered or took to flight. When the Emperor himself had deserted, it did not seem disgraceful for his soldiers to follow his example.

Daia is reported by Lactantius to have reached Nicomedia, a distance of a hundred and sixty miles, within twenty-four hours. From there he made his way in haste, with his wife and children and a few officers of his court, towards Syria. After being joined by some soldiers from that part of the Empire and gathering together a small number of his fugitive troops, he halted in Cappadocia and once more resumed the purple. From Nicomedia he had issued an edict of toleration, perhaps in the hope of winning the loyalty and help of his Christian subjects, or perhaps in the desire to gain the favor and support of Constantine. It was too late. He still hoped to resist Licinius, even though he had been obliged to abandon most of Asia Minor. He continued to Cilicia, where, protected by the Taurus mountains, he thought that he might be able to assemble an army that would be sufficient to withstand the advance of Licinius. At Tarsus he fell sick and died during the autumn of 313. All his provinces fell into the hands of Licinius without a struggle.

Thus Licinius became master of the entire Eastern Empire. Maximin Daia, described as a barbarian, lustful, cruel, drunken, who would give orders when intoxicated that he repented when sober; superstitious, without restraint, one who entertained his corrupt officials at licentious orgies, had done all in his power to revive and strengthen paganism in the East in some of its grosser forms. Yet he was not without a certain appreciation of learning and literature, and he did show an ingenuity in his efforts to repress the Christians that was far superior to anything of which Licinius was capable. His death was not mourned. His policies had failed utterly. His end was ignominious. Yet Licinius would soon show a genius for cruelty and perfidy that would make Daia appear almost virtuous by comparison.

Immediately after his victory over Daia, Licinius issued from Nicomedia the version of the Edict of Milan, to which we have already referred. Earlier in this same year when receiving Constantine's sister in marriage, he had been called by Constantine his "friend and brother." He had apparently been in entire agreement with his colleague in the matter of religious toleration. Now, in control of the Eastern Empire, it would not be long before he would reveal his true nature as well as his fundamental hatred for the Christians. He began at once the brutal murder of all the leading officials of Maximin Daia, as well as of all the surviving relatives of both Severus and Galerius. Most inhuman of all was the treatment meted out to Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian and widow of Galerius.

Little had Diocletian realized, when he retired from the rule of the Empire to grow cabbages in the gardens of the sumptuous palace he had built at Salona, that the years of his retirement were to be a period of almost uninterrupted grief and bitterness. We have already seen something of the disappointment that was his as he saw the system he had devised to restore unity to the Empire collapse and produce constant internal strife. It must have been a sad disillusionment to see in his old age Maximian, Galerius, and Maximin Daia revealed in their true colors, which can have been but partially known to him during the years of his activity. He had seen the methods he had inaugurated for the repression of the Christians reversed. The persecution itself, although it had produced some apostates, had also given the Church a host of martyrs and confessors. Now he had seen the persecution abandoned, and complete toleration had been declared. Yet none of these disappointments can have brought him such poignant grief and suffering as did the fate of his daughter Valeria.

On the death of her husband, Galerius, she had gone to Maximin Daia as her protector, thinking that in his dominions she might live in greater security than she would find elsewhere. Although Daia already had a wife, he offered to put her away, and demanded the hand of Valeria. She replied that she would not consider marriage, when the ashes of her husband, who was Daia's father by adoption, were not yet cold; that in offering to divorce his own faithful wife and thus make way for another, he was acting impiously; that she might, in turn, be cast off in the same way; and, finally, that it was indecent, unexampled and unlawful for a woman of her dignity to contract a second marriage. When Daia heard her answer, rage and furious resentment ensued and he seized her goods and possessions, removed her servants and attendants, and banished her, together with her mother, Prisca, but appointed no fixed place for their exile. In her banishment she was driven from each place where she sought refuge. Her closest friends were condemned to death on charges of adultery. She sent a message to her aged father from a desert spot in Syria where she and her mother were making a halt during their exile. Diocletian sent messengers to Daia asking that his daughter be sent to him. He continued to send entreaties, finally using as his messenger a relative of his who occupied a position of high authority in the army, but all his efforts met only with a stern refusal. When Licinius came into power he commanded that Valeria should be put to death. Even Daia had been satisfied with exile. Diocletian's daughter, together with her mother, was discovered in mean garb at Thessalonica, where they had arrived after fifteen months of wandering. There they were seized and led to execution. They were beheaded and their bodies were cast into the sea.

The Jovian dynasty was now completely overthrown. When Diocletian died, probably three years later in 316, no survivor remained from the house he had established. His aims had been high. He had honestly sought the unity and prosperity of the Empire. He had instituted the persecution of the Christians, at the instigation of Galerius, because it seemed to him the one way to overcome the most serious obstacle to the attainment of his purpose. His unselfish devotion to the welfare of the Empire was evident in the fact that he voluntarily relinquished his power and was never willing to resume it. But he was unable to read the signs of the times. He was attempting to reconstruct with materials that were already obsolete. He never attained even the rest and freedom from anxiety that he sought after his years of strenuous activity. Still more tragic was the end of his wife and daughter who, before the outbreak of the persecution, had been closely associated with the Christians. One cannot but speculate on what the outcome might have been, had they remained loyal to the Christian faith and become confessors or even martyrs. They would have escaped much agony and suffering. Their steadfastness might have been a powerful inspiration to the weak Christians who fell an easy prey to the persecution. Their example might have altered the whole course of the relations between the Roman Empire and Christianity.

Constantine and Licinius, after the death of Maximin Daia, became the joint rulers of the Empire. Licinius had risen from the ranks, in part through his military skill, but chiefly through the influence of Galerius. He was a man of little intellectual interest or ability, of very little education, incapable of any original thinking, and quite without gifts of discernment. His murders made it obvious that he was aiming at the sole rule of the Empire and that there would be little of subtlety in his methods. By these very acts of insensate cruelty he made it obvious that he constituted the only obstacle to the attainment of absolute supremacy by Constantine. It was quite impossible that harmony should long survive between these two joint rulers and nominal allies, whose respective ambitions and aims could not fail to produce rivalry.

The testimony of our authorities is not conclusive with regard to the responsibility for the initiating of open conflict. Constantine, after the repression of the Frankish revolt in the spring and summer of 313, was much occupied with the Donatist schism and the welfare of the Catholic Church in the West. Still he had time to mature plans for the future conduct of the Empire. It seems clear that he had a definite policy with regard to its administration. His plan was to appoint a Caesar to administer the provinces formerly controlled by Maxentius, together with the diocese of Pannonia, which had belonged to Licinius after the death of Severus. This territory to be assigned to the Caesar would serve as a buffer between the two Augusti. He selected for the office of Caesar Bassianus, who was married to Anastasia, his half-sister. Licinius, convinced that Bassianus in this position would be but a tool of Constantine, resented this appointment, and formed a conspiracy with Senecio, the brother of Bassianus. Through Senecio he contrived to rouse Bassianus to revolt against Constantine. The plot was discovered and Bassianus was summarily executed. Licinius was commanded by Constantine to deliver up Senecio to him. His refusal to comply was sufficient evidence of his own guilt. Licinius made his attitude still more obvious by causing Constantine's statues at Emona (Laibach) to be cast down and destroyed. Open warfare between the two Augusti was inevitable. Constantine reasserted his Claudian descent on his coinage, assembled his troops in the north of Italy and, in the summer of 314, he marched by way of Aquileia and thence into Illyricum. Speed was essential to his success, and that is clearly why he made this advance at once, even though with a very small army. It was necessary that he make certain of the Danubian provinces, before the army of Licinius, which had been engaged in the pursuit of Maximin Daia, could be reassembled.

Did Constantine initiate the hostilities? Zosimus accuses him of attempting to seize some of the provinces that belonged to Licinius. Since Zosimus constantly reiterates the charge of failing to keep faith, and invariably attributes base motives to Constantine, this assertion is not to be taken too seriously. It had been impossible for the two Augusti to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement regarding the disposition of the provinces. The plot of Bassianus, instigated by Licinius, together with the refusal of Licinius to deliver up Senecio, had made his aims obvious, even had his murders and the destruction of the statues of Constantine not been sufficiently conclusive. Although Constantine may have moved first, it was a defensive move to forestall the impending attack of Licinius. Early in October he met the army of Licinius, which was numerically nearly twice as strong as his own, at Cibalae in Pannonia, about one hundred and fifty miles north-west of Belgrade. Zosimus has given us an extensive account of the battle that ensued. Licinius appears to have established his headquarters at the top of a hill that was approached by a steep rugged road, while his army occupied a spacious plain below the city and extended under the brow of the hill for protection. Constantine drew up near the hill, stationing his cavalry in the front, and attacked without delay. After both sides had exhausted their darts, they continued to fight for a long time with spears and javelins. The battle continued from morning until evening. Finally the right wing, which was commanded by Constantine himself, by a cavalry charge, turned the troops of Licinius and prevailed. When the army of Licinius saw their commander mounted and ready to take to flight, they too ran off in haste, abandoning their cattle and provisions, and following him to Sirmium, nearly fifty miles away. Licinius appears to have lost more than half his troops in this engagement. Breaking down a bridge over the Danube, he continued his retreat to the Balkans, and, at Adrianople, he prepared to offer resistance once more.

Constantine, whose first contingent sent in pursuit of Licinius lost its way, soon followed close on his heels and overtook Licinius at Castra Mardiensis (Mardia) in Thrace. Licinius had received reinforcements from Moesia and Macedonia and felt so confident of success in this next encounter that he had already declared Constantine deposed, and had appointed one of his generals, Aurelius Valerius Valens, as Augustus of the West. He was now able to offer somewhat stronger resistance than he did at Cibalae. Again the battle was hotly fought; at first, with bows at a distance; then later, hand to hand. When a detachment that Constantine had stationed on a hill descended upon the armies that were already engaged in conflict and helped to encircle the troops of Licinius, victory seemed assured for Constantine, but it was not decisive; and Licinius' army was able to make an orderly retreat. During the ensuing night Licinius retreated to Beroea in Thrace, thus cutting Constantine off from the Danube and rendering his return to Gaul impossible, should the army of Licinius return from the East. The situation of Licinius would be even more precarious if Constantine were to seize Byzantium and block the Bosphorus with his fleet. It was, therefore, decided to declare a truce that the two emperors might confer and, if possible, arrive at an agreement. Although the victories of Constantine were not yet decisive, his position was the stronger one and he was sufficiently in control of the situation to be able to dictate the terms of the agreement. Licinius found himself compelled to acquiesce in the deposition of Valens, who was speedily put to death; and also was required to cede to Constantine all of Illyricum, except the Thracian province. He seems, however, to have been granted the full power of legislation and to have been given the right to issue edicts in his own provinces, while Constantine relinquished the prerogative of the Senior Augustus to legislate for the entire Empire. It was also agreed that neither Emperor should enter the provinces of his colleague unless it became necessary for him to do so because of barbarian invasion.

Although Constantine appeared to have abandoned important prerogatives, yet it was really he who gained by the agreement made at this time. He added to his territory the important provinces of Pannonia, Moesia, Dalmatia and Dacia, as well as Illyria together with the Illyrian legions; while Licinius retained but the barest foothold in Europe. Each Augustus really kept what he held after the battle of Mardia. Although this division of Empire was not permanent, it was an important step towards the ultimate separation of East and West that was to come later; and the group of provinces that had formerly been known as Illyricum has never regained its unity. Thus, at the end of 314 the Empire was rent asunder into two parts, each of which was governed by an emperor who was quite independent of his colleague. Yet the outward appearance of unity was still to be maintained.

A permanent peace between the two rival Augusti was hardly possible, yet outwardly it continued for nine years and, at least during its early stages it was made to appear stable. To this end Constantine and Licinius held the consulship together in 315 and united in repelling a Gothic invasion and in strengthening the fortifications on the lower Danube. During the latter half of this year Constantine was chiefly at Milan and at Rome, where he celebrated his Decennalia and the triumphal arch, of which we have already spoken, was formally dedicated. The following year, in which Diocletian's death seems to have occurred, Constantine spent largely in Gaul, going from Treves to Arles by way of Vienne. In 317, on March 1 Constantine, who was now giving his attention to his eastern provinces, announced at Serdica the appointment of his sons Crispus and Constantine, the latter the first son born of Fausta and probably about a year and a half old, as Caesars. Crispus, the son of Minervina, was now a youth. At the same time Licinius Licinianus, the illegitimate son of Licinius, who is reported by Zosimus to have been twenty years of age, was appointed as the sole Caesar for his father. It is evident how completely the principles established by Diocletian had now broken down. The title Caesar was still used, but the principle of dynastic succession had been definitely adopted in its most offensive form, with the appointment of a child certainly less than two years of age. Constantine's experience in the appointment of Bassianus had evidently caused him to lose all confidence in the principle of coöption or adoption. He evidently felt that heredity would be a strong incentive to loyalty and that the establishment of a dynastic line would make for permanence and stability. He was now doubly provided. He had a Caesar approaching maturity to oppose to any claims that Licinius might make, as well as an infant Caesar, born in the purple, as the lawful son of a reigning Emperor and an Empress of equal rank. There is a tale that Licinius arranged a marriage between his daughter and Crispus at about this time, thus hoping to unite the hereditary claims to the East with those to the West. Such an arrangement might easily have the effect of rousing a party in the East opposed to Crispus, and might eventually bring about a rift between father and son; but there is little evidence to support this tale. At about this same time a second son was born to Constantine by Fausta, who was named Constantius.

Outwardly all might seem harmonious but it was evident that beneath the surface there was a conflict of aims, of principles, and of personalities. The young Licinius Licinianus, the son of a slave, had but slight chance of succession as compared with the sons of Constantine. Each Augustus had the ambition to be sole ruler. Licinius, who had at first been elated by the acquisition of the provinces of Maximin Daia, must have found it very humiliating to have to abandon Macedonia and Greece, Pannonia and Moesia and Illyria, a loss that seriously diminished his chances of ever winning a decisive victory over Constantine. While the Augustus of the West was still increasing his territory and expanding his influence, the Emperor of the East was constantly losing his popularity with his own subjects. His only claim to their loyalty lay in his military gifts, a field in which he had not shown of late any marked success. Even the favor which he manifested towards paganism did not seem to bring him great popularity with his pagan subjects, while Constantine appeared to be able, for the time at least, to win the loyal support of his Christian subjects through the favor he bestowed on them, without seriously endangering the loyalty of the pagans. Moreover Constantine, who was still young and vigorous, was respected as a brave soldier of generous disposition who lived a chaste life; while Licinius saw old age approaching with the constant shrinking of his prospects for attaining increased power, and was well known to his subjects as profligate, violent, selfish and bitter.

It was, however, the conflict of policy regarding religion that was ultimately to constitute the real basis of the rupture between the two Augusti and to provoke civil war.

Of Constantine's activities during the years that intervened before the outbreak of open hostilities we know but little. In 318 he was chiefly in the East, spending some time at Serdica and at Sirmium. He visited Italy during this year, but his interest was apparently more concerned with his eastern provinces. The continuator of Cassius Dio reports a remark made by Constantine: "Serdica is my Rome." It may well be that he was already thinking of transferring his capital to the East and was considering Serdica as a possible place at which to locate it. The following year he proclaimed himself and his son Constantine as consuls for the ensuing year. In this we may see the rising ambition and influence of Fausta. In 321 he announced Crispus and the young Constantine, while the bastard Licinius Licinianus was ignored. In the meantime he was enacting legislation which granted constantly increased privileges to his Christian subjects. While he did not constitute Christianity a state religion, he authorized the establishment of episcopal courts whose verdicts should enjoy the same validity as the civil courts. In 321 he issued a rescript by the terms of which it became lawful for a citizen to bequeath his property to the Church, which thus became a recognized corporation within the State. In the meantime, his efforts to resolve the problems involved in the schism of the Donatists, while not crowned with brilliant success, had made evident his deep concern with the internal welfare of the Church and his support of the Catholics as opposed to the pretensions of the schismatics. Now a new doctrinal problem, which will soon claim our attention, had arisen, one which necessitated the assembly of several synods.

These gatherings of bishops appeared to Licinius as potential conspiracies against him, assembling with the connivance of Constantine and devoted to his interests. Licinius, as an act of reprisal, now openly abandoned all the principles of the Edict of Milan, and began a renewed persecution of the Christians employing methods which, if not violent, were a source of constant irritation. He regarded the pagan party as the more numerous, better educated, and wealthier, and felt more security in espousing their cause than in imitating the policy of Constantine. It was said that he hated the Christians, because they realized that they were persecuted only in the provinces where he was present. When, in 322, Constantine named himself and his younger son as consuls, Licinius replied by announcing himself as consul together with his son. An open rupture was imminent and preparations for war were made by both Augusti.

A fresh invasion of Pannonia by Sarmatians, encouraged by the withdrawal of troops from the Danubian frontier, kept Constantine occupied during 322 and contributed towards the maintenance of peace within the Empire. He conducted this campaign with marked success and took many prisoners and a large amount of booty. Zosimus gives an extensive account of this victory which included the slaying of the Sarmatian chief, Rausimodus. The following year the Goths invaded Moesia and Thrace and, to repel them, Constantine, in accordance with the terms agreed on after the defeat of Licinius at Cibalae, entered the territory of Licinius. Julian the Apostate, who found great delight in ridiculing the achievements of his illustrious uncle, represents Constantine as boasting that he was a much greater general that Trajan, since it is far more glorious to recover what you have lost than it is merely to conquer what did not formerly belong to you. Constantine's victories, however, appear to have been decisive and the campaigns were apparently of sufficient magnitude to demand all his attention, and thus to delay the inevitable conflict with Licinius. In the meantime, the young Crispus, to whom had been entrusted the administration of Gaul and Britain, won a distinguished victory over the Alemanni. He is extravagantly praised by the panegyrist Nazarius, who says that he accomplished the feat "with incredible youthfulness."

Zosimus states that it was Constantine's ambition that caused open warfare to break out once more between the two emperors. Eutropius accuses Constantine of striving after the rule of the whole world. The biographer who is known as the Anonymous Valesianus is probably nearer to the truth when he asserts that Licinius was stirred to sudden madness and ordered all the Christians to be driven from the palace. It is significant that Orosius uses these same words. The Anonymous Valesianus gives as another reason the fact that Licinius resented Constantine's passing through his territories to repel the invasion of the Goths, although this was definitely permitted by the terms of their treaty. But Licinius was obviously looking for any plausible grievance that he might utilize for his own ends. It is also related that Licinius roused the just wrath of Constantine by alternating arrogant threats with humble entreaties.

Constantine was in Lower Pannonia when Licinius declared war. By the end of May, 323, he left Sirmium and made his way to Thessalonica (Salonica) where he proceeded at once with the building of a harbor (for until now Thessalonica had none), which would be sufficient to accommodate the two hundred galleys and two thousand transport ships which he had in preparation. The galleys were manned by thirty oarsmen each. In the early spring of 324 Constantine's son Crispus arrived to take command of the fleet for his father. Zosimus reports that Constantine mustered an army of 120,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Licinius in the meantime had not been idle. He had gathered at Adrianople an army of 150,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry. He had a still greater superiority in ships. He had a fleet of three hundred and fifty fighting vessels, of which Egypt had provided one hundred and thirty; Cyprus and Lycia one hundred and ten. The rest of his fleet had been furnished to a great extent by the cities of Asia Minor. He placed in command Amandus, an experienced admiral. Not since the death of Septimius Severus had armies and fleets of such magnitude been gathered for civil strife. The navy of Licinius was in the Dardanelles, while Constantine's was at the Athenian harbor of Piraeus. Licinius publicly proclaimed his allegiance to the pagan gods. He assembled soothsayers, magicians and priests of various pagan cults; he sought and obtained favorable omens from augury and divination. Eusebius relates that, although he reviled and derided the *labarum,* the standard of the Cross under which Constantine proceeded to victory, he urged his troops to avoid contact with it and not to attack the fifty stalwart soldiers who guarded it. Constantine, in the meantime, he describes as entering the conflict after constant prayer in his tent. The conflict now was clearly between the forces of Christianity and those of paganism. It was early in June 324 that Constantine left Thessalonica, and on July 3 the two armies met in the plain near Adrianople. Constantine had his line extended to command all the fords of the Hebrus, while Licinius was encamped in the town and the country which sloped towards the river, and had built entrenchments to defend his camp while awaiting the attack of Constantine. When Constantine arrived on the opposite bank of the river, where the land was chiefly marsh and swamp, his men were exhausted by the long march in the heat of summer. He, therefore, did not attack Licinius at once, but remained for several days before taking the initiative. Then his soldiers brought logs from the forest and made great display of building a bridge across the river. While the attention of Licinius and his army was thus diverted, Constantine sent five thousand archers and eighty cavalry across the river secretly by a ford. They concealed themselves in the wood in the rear of Licinius' forces, and were thus in readiness to make good use of their bows when Constantine found the opportunity to cross the river Hebrus with another detachment. This opportunity soon arrived and, once Constantine and a bare dozen cavalrymen had got to the opposite bank, the way was opened up for the crossing of the main body of his troops without opposition. In the great engagement that ensued, the soldiers of Licinius were obliged to abandon their entrenched position and to fight in a situation that offered no advantages against an army that was both in their front and in their rear. Despite the superiority of numbers, Licinius was at a disadvantage against the discipline of Constantine's Dalmatians. Jordanes, in writing of the history of his people, maintains that there were also Goths in the victorious army of Constantine. The battle lasted throughout the day and by evening the camp of Licinius had been seized; 34,000 of his men lay dead on the field of battle; and he was himself obliged to flee with the remainder of his army towards Byzantium. Constantine was slightly wounded in the conflict and issued orders that Licinius and his men were not to be pursued in their flight. Again Constantine had won a signal victory against greatly superior numbers.

As long as Licinius might maintain himself in Byzantium it would be impossible to conquer him and the opportunity to raise fresh troops in Anatolia would give him the hope of ultimate success. He still had a foothold in eastern Europe and had his fleet holding the straits. Asia Minor was still his. Byzantium could withstand a long siege. It had endured for only eleven days when besieged by Maximin Daia, but then it was ill prepared. Now it could hold out indefinitely. But despite the advantages he had, Licinius made evident the utter ineffectiveness of purely defensive warfare. His navy remained idle in the straits and the crews of his ships, drawn from various provinces, probably did not render a too willing service. He needed to keep command of the sea from the Euxine to the Aegean and to hinder Constantine from landing in Asia Minor; he must prevent the fleet under the command of Crispus from landing and making a diversion, if Constantine should collect a force in Asia Minor and attempt to cross. Had Amandus been gifted with greater ingenuity and imagination he would probably have proceeded with his fleet at once to Thessalonica to make a surprise attack on the fleet of Crispus assembled there. Instead of this the initiative was left to Constantine.

Constantine ordered Crispus to force the Dardanelles. He seemed to have but slight chance of success, but, although lacking the experience of Amandus, he had both ability and resourcefulness. Two naval engagements on successive days followed immediately on his arrival at the Hellespont. In the first of these engagements Amandus, who evidently did not regard seriously the smaller fleet under Crispus, thought that he could easily surround it. On the contrary, as his ships sailed about in disorder, those of Crispus had the advantage in the narrow sea and, as they met one another stern to stern, a considerable number of the ships of Amandus were sunk or destroyed. Although both wind and tide had favored the larger fleet, night brought the first engagement to a close without decisive issue. The following day Amandus hesitated when he saw fresh galleys coming up to join the forces of Crispus, and did not give battle until noonday. Then the wind, which had been blowing from the north during the morning shifted to the south and drove some of Amandus' ships to the Asiatic shore. Some were dashed on the rocks. Others foundered with all on board. The remainder of his fleet fled to the harbor of Byzantium for shelter. Byzantium was thus cut off from all supplies that might come to it by sea. Amandus, with only four ships, made his escape to Asia, while Constantine's fleet, under the command of Crispus, arrived in the Hellespont with a plentiful supply of provisions and joined in the siege of Byzantium.

Apparently it was before the fleet of Constantine arrived that Licinius fled with his treasure to Chalcedon. Now he repeated his act of ten years earlier and elevated one of his subordinates, Martinianus, his *magister officiorum,* to the post of Caesar. To him he committed the duty of preventing Constantine from landing in Asia Minor. Only the weaker and less dependable troops had been left to defend Byzantium. Constantine raised a mound equal in height to the wall, and erected towers on it whence his men were able to shoot at the defenders of the city. He prosecuted the siege with battering rams and engines, and it was soon evident that nothing remained for Byzantium but to capitulate. Constantine then outwitted Martinianus, who had been sent to Lampsacus to guard against the passage of an army to the Hellespont from Thrace, by making a landing near the northern end of the Bosphorus. On September 18 the final defeat of Licinius was effected in the battle of Chrysopolis. Both Byzantium and Chalcedon surrendered and Licinius fled with 30,000 of his men to Nicomedia.

Constantine at first, through the mediation of his sister Constantia, consented to spare the life of her husband and also that of his newly appointed Caesar. Licinius was granted a place of refuge at Thessalonica; Martinianus in Cappadocia. It was impossible, however, for Licinius to refrain from intrigue. Both he and Martinianus were soon executed. The writer known as the Anonymous Valesianus says that Licinius was put to death because Constantine remembered the example of perfidy given him by Maximian Herculius and also because the soldiers mutinied and demanded the death penalty for him. Eutropius says that he was slain as a private citizen in violation of the sanctity of an oath. He had been given the kiss of peace and had been welcomed at the Emperor's table as an honored guest, but presumably Constantine had sufficient reasons for regarding it as unsafe to permit him to live. Eusebius says that he was executed in accordance with the laws of war. Socrates states that shortly after he took up his residence at Thessalonica Licinius managed to gather some barbarian mercenaries and to attempt to repair his late disaster by a fresh appeal to arms. The late Byzantine writer Zonaras relates that the soldiers complained of the disloyalty of Licinius and that these complaints were referred to the Senate, which proceeded to condemn him. All the available evidence would seem to indicate that Constantine had ample justification for reversing his policy of clemency in the case of so treacherous a foe. His son, Licinius Licinianus, was merely deprived of the rank of Caesar for the present. His death was for a time deferred. The statues of Licinius were thrown down and all his laws were hastily abolished. This measure, however, was ill-advised and later some of them had to be reenacted.

By the victory of Constantine the system inaugurated by Diocletian thirty-seven years earlier was completely overthrown. Constantine became sole Emperor and, after a period of thirty-nine years, the Empire was once more united under a single ruler. Caesar, turned Christian, now had the Christians of the East as well as those of the West under his jurisdiction. In the East he had to meet a problem far more serious than the schism of the Donatists, for it threatened the Christian Faith itself. Would it be possible for a Caesar, who had declared himself an adherent of the Christian Faith, to guide the Church into the path that would preserve the integrity of her Faith? Would it be possible for the ruler in temporal things to refrain from attempting to rule in matters of faith as well?

Chapter XI

THE END OF THE PERSECUTION

We have already seen the persecution inaugurated by Diocletian in 303 in its early stages of increasing severity. Three successive edicts had been promulgated before Diocletian's illness at Rome in the winter of 303–304. We have mentioned the fourth edict which was put forth by Maximian alone in April, 304, while the Senior Augustus was "politically dead." It seems to have been when Maximian was presiding at the Secular Games at Rome that the cry, "Down with the Christians!" provided him a pretext, which the ready assent of the Senate facilitated, for the promulgation of this fourth edict, which commanded all persons without exception to sacrifice and offer libation to the gods. Diocletian had sought above all else to avoid bloodshed; such was not Maximian's aim. Diocletian had aimed his blows at the clergy and at the Holy Scriptures. Maximian was not so fastidious. With him there was one clear objective. Every Christian must face the choice between apostasy and death. Diocletian's name was affixed to this edict and it would appear that, although early in 305 he had barely recovered his physical and mental health, his acquiescence must have been secured, else it would not have been promulgated in Palestine.

We have also seen something of the fiercer and more intense zeal that was aroused in many of the Christians by this edict. We have already mentioned the fanaticism that appears to have developed in some quarters. This increased zeal was met by Maximian and Galerius, under the influence of the apostate

Theotecnus, a veritable prototype of the modern anti-clerical, with a dastardly attack on the purity of Christian maidens. Tecusa at Ancyra, Theodora at Alexandria, Agnes at Rome, and Irene at Thessalonica, whom we have already mentioned, fell victims to this foul assault. This fourth edict seems to have been enforced in the provinces of Galerius already in the late winter of 304 before we know of its promulgation by Maximian, while in Maxminian's provinces there is no evidence of its enforcement until the following summer. In the provinces of Diocletian it does not seem to have become active until the end of the winter of 305, probably less than two months before Diocletian's abdication.

When Galerius rose to power, on the resignation of the two Augusti, although Severus was really subject to Constantius Chlorus, his real devotion was given to Galerius, who thus came virtually into control of three-fourths of the Empire. Together with his nephew, Maximin Daia, he inaugurated a fresh persecution which continued with unabated severity in the East and reached its culmination in 308. Theotecnus, who became governor of Galatia and later *Curator* at Antioch, not content with his abandonment of Christianity for Neo-Platonism, waxed more and more base in the methods he advocated to stamp out Christianity. He was the chief adviser of Daia. In all cities the altars were to be erected again; even infants were to be required to partake of the food which had been offered in the sacrifices; the meat in the markets was to be sprinkled with lustral water that none might escape the contamination of paganism. The Christians in Gaul and Britain were spared by the clemency and humanity of Constantius Chlorus and by the continuation of his policies after his death by his son, and the rigor of the persecution was abated at Rome with the usurpation of Maxentius in 306, but in the remainder of the Empire a reign of terror prevailed.

The substitution of mutilation for death, perhaps as a result of the conference at Carnuntum, may have been intended as a relaxation of the severity of the persecution, but it was followed after a short interval by the Fifth Edict, which embodied the provisions we have just mentioned, at the prompting of Theotecnus. It is only for the provinces of Palestine that we have in any sense a complete account of the martyrdoms, but from the situation that existed there, it is not difficult to imagine what occurred in the other provinces of the East. Eusebius, an eyewitness of many of the events he describes and personally acquainted with many of those whose virtue and fortitude he extols, has left us, in his *Martyrs of Palestine,* a picture of the progress of the persecution in that part of the Roman world in which he was living. The deep feeling with which Eusebius wrote this account may be inferred from the fact that Pamphilus, a priest of Caesarea, who was perhaps his closest friend, perished by a martyr's death in this persecution, after having spent a year and a half in prison. Eusebius had assisted him in writing his Apology for Origen and, after his friend's death, completed and published the work.

Among the martyrs of Palestine the first was Procopius, a lector of the Church at Caesarea, who seems to have been beheaded for quoting a familiar line from Homer's Iliad (II, 204–5):

"It is not good that there be lords many:
Let one be lord,—one king."

This was interpreted as an attack on the tetrarchy, and, therefore as treason. He had been commanded to offer libation to the four emperors and, no doubt, thought that his statement of his belief in one God might be more acceptable to them if expressed in the familiar words of the ancient pagan poet. Of course, it may have been a protest that the subjects of the

Empire had fared better in the days when one Emperor ruled. Procopius was followed by many rulers of the country churches, who heroically endured terrible suffering. We are given a revolting list of the methods of torture—the rack, the scourgings, the tearing of the sides of the victims by fetters, and the dislocation of their hands by the weight of the heavy chains they had to bear. Many were tortured and were then reported to have sacrificed, even though they had not done so. Alpheus, of noble family, a reader and exorcist in the church at Caesarea, together with Zacchaeus, a deacon from Gadara, endured stripes and scrapings, bonds and other tortures, as well as a night and a day in the stocks, before being beheaded for confessing "one only God and Christ Jesus as king."

At Antioch, Romanus, a deacon and exorcist, of Caesarea, who was present at the destruction of the churches, saw numbers of men, together with women and children, running in fear to sacrifice to idols. He rebuked them loudly and was placed under arrest. When told by the judge that he was to die by fire, he received his sentence with a smile. When tied to the stake, before the lighting of the fire, he cried out, "Where is the fire for me?" For this his tongue was cut out and he was cast into prison, where he remained until the amnesty proclaimed in honor of the Emperor's Vicennalia. Then, when others were released, he was put in the stocks, and finally was strangled on the same day that saw the martyrdom of Zacchaeus and Alpheus. These martyrdoms were in the first year of the persecution.

The following year Urbanius, governor of Palestine, whose fierceness against the Christians was pronounced (as was the case also with his successor Firmianus), promulgated the Fourth Edict. Timotheus, at Gaza, after torture was burnt to death by a slow fire. Agapius and Thecla were thrown to wild beasts. The former, however, seems to have survived this ordeal, only to be imprisoned until the fourth year of the persecution, when, in the presence of Maximin Daia, he was again brought into the arena and then cast into the sea. Apphianus, who had abandoned the luxurious home of his father because he could not abide the heathen practices observed there, won his martyrdom, after intense tortures and imprisonment, as the reward of his attempt to dissuade the governor, Urbanus, from offering sacrifice. Ulpianus, after being scourged, was enclosed in a raw ox-hide with a dog and an asp and cast into the sea. Aedesius, a student of philosophy, the brother of Apphianus, followed the example of his brother and met a like end at Alexandria. These were some of the victims of the persecution in its early stages. Probably also to this earlier period belongs the destruction reported by Eusebius of an entire community in a Christian village in Phrygia. It seems an obvious exaggeration that there should have been an exclusively Christian village, yet it is confirmed also by Lactantius and by the discovery by Ramsay in recent times of the evidence of a great massacre at Eumenea, where a surprising number of Christian inscriptions from the third century have been discovered, while from the fourth and succeeding centuries but four have come to light.

On the Feast of Easter, 307, Theodosia, a maiden from Tyre, less than eighteen years old, was tortured at Caesarea and then cast into the sea, because she spoke words of encouragement to the Christian prisoners and asked their prayers. Later in the same year Silvanus, a priest and confessor, who later became bishop of Gaza, was condemned to the copper mines, together with other confessors who were most firm. Their ankles were disabled with hot irons before they were committed to the mines, while others were first mutilated. Dominus was burned to death. Three other Christians were condemned to single pugilistic combat. Auxentius was cast to wild beasts. It was at this time that Pamphilus, the dearest friend of Eusebius, finally met his death. The following year ninety-seven Christians who had been condemned to the porphyry quarry in the Thebaid, were summoned to appear before Firmianus, who had now become governor of Palestine. They were maimed in their left feet, their right eyes removed and the eye-socket burned, and then they were sent to the mines to labor. The same penalty was applied to others, notably to a group at Gaza who had assembled for the reading of the Scriptures. One of this group, a woman, who resisted an attack on her chastity, was scourged and then raised aloft on a stake and her sides lacerated. Another woman, as she saw her tortured, cried out, "How long will you thus cruelly torture my sister?" She was seized and force was applied to compel her to sacrifice. Then, overcome by her zeal, she kicked over the altar. More severe tortures were then inflicted on her than those endured by the first woman, after which both of them were cast into the fire. Along with them Paul was beheaded even as he prayed for Jews, Samaritans, and for his pagan persecutors. Large numbers were sent to the mines in Palestine and in Cilicia.

The following year saw the climax of this period of persecution ushered in by the promulgation of the Fifth Edict. Antoninus, Zebinas and Germanus received the death penalty because they attempted to dissuade the governor Firmianus from sacrificing and publicly proclaimed themselves Christians. Ennathas, a woman of Scythopolis, however, was cruelly scourged, then beaten with thongs while she was led through the streets of Caesarea, before being burned, even though she had been guilty of no provocative words or acts. Increasing numbers were sent to the mines, while death by beheading and by burning was becoming more and more frequent, along with the constant barbarous tortures. Phileas, bishop of Thmuis, had been beheaded at about the same time that Pamphilus was cast into prison. It has been asserted that Palestine was a center of extreme fanaticism, but it is quite unlikely that there was a greater tendency in this direction in Palestine and Syria and Egypt than there was in North Africa and in Spain.

In the spring of this year came the toleration edict of Galerius which preceded his death. Although at first he was compelled to give the appearance of adhering to its provisions, Daia, now in control in the East and with his territories greatly enlarged, was determined to renew the persecution with even greater vigor and to prosecute it more strenuously and more systematically than before. He did, on receiving the edict of Galerius, give to his Praetorian Prefect, Sabinus, verbal instructions to relax the pressure of the persecution and to let the new policy be known to his subordinates. Eusebius has incorporated in his *History* the letter in which Sabinus circulated these instructions. Because of the "obstinacy and most unconquerable determination" of some of the Christians who "could neither be turned back from their purpose by the just reason of the command, nor be intimidated by the impending punishment," and have therefore brought themselves into danger, the Emperors have commanded that their devoted servant (Sabinus) write "that if any Christian be found engaged in the worship of his own people," the governors are to refrain from molesting and endangering him, and not to suppose it necessary to punish any one on this pretext. For it has been proved by long experience that they can in no way be persuaded to abandon such obstinate conduct." So curators and magistrates are to give no further attention to the matter. In other words the persecution had failed to achieve the desired results. There were too many Christians who refused to be intimidated by torture or exile. Moreover popular sympathy in many parts of the East seemed now to be with them. To behold the bodies of dead Christians left to be devoured by beasts was a distressing experience, while in Alexandria the pagans did not forget that they had shared in the charities of the Christians in the not too remote past, and now there were those who were ready to afford a refuge for Christians in their time of persecution. It is not to be wondered at that the liberation of the prisoners and the return of the exiles should have been greeted with congratulations and expressions of joy by their pagan neighbors.

This, however, was not a sight that would bring satisfaction to Daia. He had evidently referred to the religion of the Christians in his instructions to the provincial governors as non-Roman. That could not fail to have its influence in developing a disaffection towards the Christians, once the first enthusiastic sympathy towards them had begun to wane. All this exultation and the evident capacity for recovery in the Christians must have been a real source of irritation to Daia. In less than six months after the persecution had been relaxed the Christians were forbidden to assemble in the cemeteries. The reverence for the martyrs was a most sacred sentiment with the Christians and services in their honor were conducted at their place of burial with deep devotion. These services were obviously a potent force in developing deeper loyalty and steadfastness in the weaker Christians. Daia might readily interpret them as subversive of loyalty to the State and, by reiterating the ancient charges of immorality against the Christians, he could find a pretext for placing them under a ban. His next step, apparently, was to have a petition presented to him at Nicomedia urging that he banish Christians from the city. Then, as he made his progress through the various cities of his provinces, similar petitions were presented. At Antioch Theotecnus was probably the instigator of the petition. The seizure of various provinces in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus, while Licinius had been engaged in the West, had occupied Daia during the period immediately after his permitting a cessation of the persecution. Now, with the added sense of security that these accessions of territory gave him, he began once more to put into operation his true policy with regard to the Christians.

In November Peter, bishop of Alexandria, called "a splendid model of a bishop," was suddenly put to death. He had published shortly before Easter in 306 his *Epistola canonica,* in which he had defined the conditions on which those who lapsed under the pressure of persecution were to be restored to communion. Methodius, bishop of Olympus in Lycia, who had written an able treatise in refutation of Gnostic teaching, as well as a vindication of the traditional teaching of the Church against some of the extravagant doctrines of Origen, was another victim. About the same time came the martyrdom of Silvanus, bishop of Emesa (Homs) in Syria for nearly forty years, who was thrown to wild beasts. At Nicomedia, where Daia was now living, the revered bishop Anthimus was put to death. At Antioch, where Theotecnus was having his own way, Lucian, a priest who was the head of the catechetical school at which Arius was a student, was still another victim. Lucian was a theologian and a scholar, but he was also the real author of the Arian teaching about the Person of Christ. Although heretical in his theology, he became a martyr; thus winning later a great devotion from Helena, the mother of Constantine, and also giving a definite prestige to his disciples, who were members of the party of Arius. He was evidently regarded as a most distinguished teacher, for not only did he attract students from a great distance but he was also summoned to Nicomedia by Maximin Daia to make a defence of the Christian Faith in his presence. It was there that he was beheaded on January 7, 312. As it became obvious that the petitions that were presented to Daia asking that the Christians be excluded from particular territories were a certain passport to his favor, other towns adopted the same device; some objecting to the erection of a church within their walls, others asking him to expel the Christians who were already in their city and territory. Daia welcomed with enthusiasm such lofty aims in his subjects and his gracious answers were inscribed on pillars by the loyal citizens of the favored cities. Probably Daia issued a single rescript in response to all these petitions in the early summer of 312. It is this rescript, as permanently inscribed on the pillar that was erected at Tyre, that Eusebius has preserved for us.

"Now at length the feeble power of the human mind has become able to shake off and to scatter every dark mist of error, which before this besieged the sense of men, who were more wretched than impious, and enveloped them in dark and destructive ignorance; and to perceive that it is governed and established by the beneficent providence of the immortal gods. It passes belief, how grateful, how pleasing, and how agreeable it is to us, that you have given a most decided proof of your pious resolution; for even before this it was known to every one how much regard and reverence you were paying to the immortal gods, exhibiting, not a faith of bare and empty words, but continued and wonderful examples of illustrious deeds. Wherefore your city may justly be called a seat and dwelling of the immortal gods."

Then, after naming some of the misfortunes of recent times, he continues:

"All these misfortunes have taken place on account of the destructive error of the empty vanity of those impious men, when it prevailed in their souls, and, we may almost say, weighed down the whole world with shame."

He then recounts the many blessings of the present, and adds:

"But, if they still persist in their execrable vanity, let them, as you have desired, be driven far away from your city and territory, that thus, in accordance with your praiseworthy zeal in this matter, your city, after having been freed from every pollution and impiety, may, according to its natural disposition, attend to the sacred rites of the immortal gods with seemly reverence."

The pious Emperor continues with the promise of any boon that the city may ask in return for its devout disposition, and promises that the benevolent prize that the city has won from him shall be shown to future generations.

In the meantime Theotecnus—whose name most inappropriately means "Child of God"—had set to work with all the ingenuity of which he was master, to make paganism the popular religion in Antioch, where he was chief officer of finance, and to utilize the basest forms of idolatry as well as the most crude and foul libels for the destruction of Christianity and the triumph of paganism. He seems to have been something of a philosopher and a lesser light in the field of letters, but Eusebius, who was surely in a position to know him and his works, brands him as vicious and violent, fearfully clever, and a sorcerer. He set up a statue of Jupiter Philios, the god of friendship and good-will revered at Antioch, and dedicated it with imposing ceremonies, in the course of which there were initiations that may have been parodies of the rites of the Christians. Probably some of the rites were gross and repulsive. By a mechanical device the Jupiter was made to wink. His mouth would open for the utterance of oracles, and various marvels were attributed to him. In one of these oracular utterances he was made to announce that no Christians should be permitted to enter Antioch. Neo-Platonism had fallen far from the days of glory when an Emperor and his Empress, together with scholars such as Origen, attended the lectures of Plotinus.

Another device of Theotecnus was the exhibiting of placards in public places, on which were false depositions against the Christians together with a revival of all the scandalous lies about them that had been circulated in the past. More vicious and far more serious were the pamphlets that Theotecnus composed for general distribution. Chief among these was his *magnum opus,* the so-called *Acts of Pilate.* This composition, which purported to relate the personal experiences of Pilate, was replete with scandals about the divine Founder of Christianity. It was designed to fill the minds of those who read it with foul thoughts and to associate these thoughts with Christ Himself. Despite its absurd errors in chronology, for it even went so far as to date the Crucifixion five years before the time that Pilate actually came to Palestine, its scandals were sufficient to guarantee its popularity. Daia ordered copies of this inspiring work sent throughout the East and along with it a copy of his edict ordered that the *Acts of Pilate* be posted in conspicuous places and that all schoolmasters should adopt it as a text-book for their elementary schools. The aim was, of course, that the youth of the Empire, made familiar from childhood with the indecent tales related in this foul book, as well as with the other pretended revelations of Christian immorality and of the shocking horrors reported to occur at the worship of the Christians, might be trained to regard Christ and His followers with contempt and disgust. This method, which was adopted a little later by Julian in his attempt to reinstate paganism in the Empire, has obviously appealed to some of the dictators in Europe in recent years.

It was at this time that Maximin Daia attempted, as did Julian at a somewhat later period, to substitute a better order for the chaos of paganism, establishing a regular priesthood, with appropriate garb, to offer daily sacrifices in every city, under the direction of priest superintendents who were intended to exercise functions similar to some of those exercised by the bishops among the Christians. These priests were particularly devoted to the service of Jupiter Philios, whose cult was now being stressed, although the daily sacrifices were to be offered to all the gods. These priests, armed with powers of search and arrest, were expected to facilitate the detection and seizure of those who continued to practise the Christian religion.

No device, however crude and base, that could possibly cast discredit upon the Christians or degrade them in the opinion of the heathen among whom they lived, was left untried. The military commander of Damascus arrested a number of women of notoriousy evil life, and threatened them with torture unless they confessed that they were Christians and that they had attended ceremonies of shocking indecency at Christian services. The false confession thus extorted from them was placarded prominently in every town. The insane and determined bigotry of Daia combined with the diabolical ingenuity of Theotecnus to produce the most bloody and terrible persecution that the Church ever experienced. In Egypt the persecution became so severe that it drew St. Anthony from his hermitage to minister to the needs of the unhappy victims in Alexandria. We do not know how he escaped with his life. Eusebius gives a terrible description of the dreadful famine, followed by a pestilence, together with the prevalence of another most loathsome disease in the cities subject to Daia. He tells of those who would part with their most precious possessions in return for the smallest morsel of food; of the most high-born women begging in the market-places; of women willing to sell even their children. The dogs had to be killed to prevent their feeding on the bodies of the unburied dead. Only the Christians remained calm and devoted themselves to the care of the suffering and the dying, so that even the pagans were compelled reluctantly to admit that they alone showed themselves truly pitiful and god-fearing.

Daia met a serious reverse, however, when he attempted to compel the Christian province of Lesser Armenia to abandon its faith. The people of Armenia proper, which had now, as a result of the labors of St. Gregory the Illuminator, become Christian, came to the aid of their Christian kinsmen with the result that Daia suffered a signal defeat at their hands. The persecution, however, had not only brought a vast amount of torture and many martyrdoms, but it had also deprived the Church of some of its foremost intellectual and spiritual leaders. Ramsay, as a result of his extensive studies in Asia Minor, and particularly in Phrygia, arrived at the conclusion that the progressive party, the more educated and more cultivated section of the Church in the East, was destroyed at this time.

He is also convinced that the persecution thus destroyed the last chance that the Empire had of regaining vitality and health. Education, which had depended chiefly on the vigor of the municipal life, thenceforth sickened and died. In the fourth century the Church in the East became the opponent of education, with the result that in 448 Bishop Elias of Hadrianople was unable to sign his name at the Council of Constantinople. Since Christianity was to a great extent the religion of an educated people, the "last and worst evil of the long struggle was that in Diocletian's persecution the more cultured section of the Church was to a large extent killed out, so that on both sides education deteriorated and the quality of society in general was depreciated." Since the educated Greeks were quite willing to ally themselves with the uneducated Orientals against the Christians, they failed to realize that they were working out the ruin of Greek education, and that they must themselves gradually sink to the same lower level. Massacre has at all times been, not merely a crime and a "stupendous folly, but also a terrible blow to the world, to civilization, and to humanity."

In recent times an inscription has come to light, the epitaph of the Bishop Julius Eugenius at Laodicea Combusta, which reveals a hitherto unknown aspect of Daia's persecution. It would appear from this inscription that Christian soldiers were commanded to sacrifice without being granted the option of retiring from the service. It states that "Marcus Julius Eugenius, the son of Cyrillus Celer of Konessos, a member of the Senate of Laodicea, after having served in the *officium* of the governor of Pisidia, and having married Flavia Julia Flaviana, the daughter of Gaius Nestorianus, a man of senatorial rank, and after having served with distinction; and, when a command had meanwhile gone forth that Christians should offer sacrifice and not quit the service, having endured many tortures under Diogenes the governor (of Pisidia) and having contrived to quit the service, maintaining the faith of the Christians, and, having spent a short time in the city of the Laodiceans, and having been made bishop by the will of Almighty God, and having administered the bishopric for twenty-five years with full distinction . . . I made for myself a plinth and a sarcophagus on which I caused the above to be engraved, for the distinction of myself and of my family."

Daia's ill-fated conflict with the Armenians came at just the time when the Emperors in the West were becoming concerned about his actions. The Edict of Milan was without doubt aimed primarily at him. Before the end of the year 312, the news of Constantine's victory must have reached him. The Edict of Milan was issued at this same time. Then it was that he wrote to Sabinus permitting Christian worship once more. He recalled to him that when he first came to the East he had given orders that no violence should be used against the Christians but rather that they should be recalled from their mistaken ways by flattery and persuasion. This freedom from severity, he says, had resulted in many Christians returning to the worship of the gods. But when, in the preceding year, he had gone to Nicomedia, a petition was presented to him entreating him that such vicious people as the Christians should not be permitted to live in the country. Even in the face of these earnest pleas he states that he had not had the heart to drive out those who persisted in this superstition, but had granted them the privilege of doing as they pleased, even if they wished to recognize the worship of the gods. Yet, the earnestness of those who presented the petitions was so appealing that he could not endure to give them an unfriendly response, but, in acceding to their request, he was but following the example of all the ancient Emperors. So, even though in the past he has given direction that all harshness towards the Christians be abandoned and that they be treated with mildness and moderation, yet, lest they suffer insults or extortions from the soldiers or from others, flatteries and persuasion are to be used to bring the provincials to the worship of the gods. Therefore, if any (presumably Christians) should decide of his own free choice to worship the gods, he is to be accorded a friendly welcome, but those who prefer to follow their own religion are to be permitted to do so.

Sabinus, the Praetorian Prefect, is bidden to issue a proclamation so that all the subjects in the provinces may become acquainted with the delightfully ambiguous and contradictory principles the Augustus has set forth, and, incidentally, to tell them that the Christians are to be tolerated. The disingenuousness of this amazing document might well have served as a model for some of the dictators of modern times who have sought specious pretexts and ambiguous principles to justify their persecution of Christian peoples.

Daia doubtless thought by this ungracious and uncertain tolerance to win the favor of his Christian subjects. Early in 313 he set forth against Licinius, only to meet with utter defeat at the end of April. On his expedition, some time after he left Asia Minor, he must have learned of the principles of complete toleration agreed on by Constantine and Licinius. Fearing that his Christian subjects might abandon him and rally to the support of Licinius, he now issued another edict of toleration. It is a masterpiece of dissimulation and hypocrisy. It is obvious to all men that he has ever had but one concern—the welfare of all his subjects. To provide whatever is profitable for them has been his consuming desire. When he realized that, under the pretext of obedience to the edicts of Diocletian and Maximian, officials had presumed to despoil and work harm to his Christian subjects, of whom he was most anxious to take the tenderest care, and that they were being deprived of their possessions, he had sent orders a year ago granting the Christians full liberty to practise their religion without being hindered or impeded by anyone, nor should they incur the slightest suspicion in obeying the dictates of their own consciences. But some of his judges simply misunderstood his injunctions. They made the Christians so doubtful about his intentions in their regard that some of them were fearful and reluctant to enjoy the fulness of liberty which he granted them. Now these doubts and uncertainties must be dispelled and the Christians as well as his other subjects must be made to realize that he has granted to every one complete liberty to embrace and to practise whatever religion he may choose. They may even build Lord's Houses. This term ought to make it obvious to these timid and fearful subjects just how he really regards them. If, through the commands of his predecessors (for he never desired anything of the sort), any of the Christians have suffered confiscation of their houses or lands, these should be restored to the Christians so that they may know his true piety and regard towards them.

These ingratiating words must have convinced the misguided Christians that they had never realized the true nature of their benefactor. His genuine affection for them and his deep concern for their welfare were not revealed until he was on the very verge of decisive and final defeat. After his flight to Nicomedia Daia vented his wrath on the soothsayers who had promised him victory. It was from Nicomedia that he published this revelation of his true sentiments and made it quite certain that never again would his magistrates misunderstand his generous commands. Eusebius adds: "These are the words of the tyrant which were published not quite a year after the decrees against the Christians engraved by him on pillars." Pursued by the troops of Licinius, he died at Tarsus, whether from poison or from a loathsome disease, perhaps delirium tremens, within a few weeks. At length the Edict of Milan had reached the East. If the praises that Eusebius heaps on his friend and benefactor Constantine seem at times fulsome, exaggerated, even disingenuous, the explanation may be found not in the desire of the panegyrist and biographer actually to misrepresent his hero but in his memories of Daia, which could never be effaced.

Licinius had united with Constantine in setting forth what has been called the Edict of Milan. He was definitely committed to the policy of showing to the Christians at least the same favor that was granted to his other subjects. But he was far from being a Christian. When he and Constantine subsequently quarrelled, his opportunity came to give expression to his true sentiments. He became more and more pronouncedly anti-Christian. He suspected Constantine of secretly aiming to spread disaffection towards him among his Christian subjects. Eusebius compares him to a crooked and wriggling serpent who dared not openly attack the Christians for fear of Constantine, but who was secretly dealing insidious blows against them.

When Constantine became involved in the attempt to guide the fortunes of the Church through the troublous waters of the Arian conflict, Licinius became suspicious of the synods and councils that were held at frequent intervals. He forbade the bishops in his provinces to leave their own district or to participate in any such assemblies. They must remain at home and not use these gatherings, which were ostensibly to perfect the discipline of the Church, as a pretext or opportunity for plotting treason against their Emperor. Another edict, most fitting from the hand of one whose life had been a most impressive example of moral rectitude, forbade the sexes to assemble together for worship. Christians must be safeguarded from the dangers of contamination when men and women came together for the worship of God. Bishops and priests must be more discreet. They must limit their ministrations to men. Women must be provided to perform such functions for their own sex. These absurd restrictions reached their climax in an edict which forbade the Christians to meet in their churches within the towns. If they felt that they must assemble, the suitable place was outside the city gates. Such a rule was really necessary for hygienic reasons. In rural surroundings, away from the crowded towns, the air was purer. The hearts of the Christians must have been devoid of all sensibility if they were not deeply touched by the profound concern of Licinius for their health and well-being. Such legislation could hardly be taken seriously. It was evidence only of a stupid desire to irritate. The only appropriate response would be quiet ridicule.

It was not long before Licinius had utterly disavowed the Edict of Milan. Members of the court and of the army were required to sacrifice or else to face dismissal. It was generally possible to find a pretext for confiscation as well. Eusebius compares Licinius' thirst for gold with the thirst of Tantalus. He plundered the churches. The niggardly meanness of the farmer, which Aurelius Victor attributes to him, became more and more obvious. Exile to the mines again became common. The bishops were accused of praying for Constantine instead of for Licinius and the Empire. Imprisonment, exile, mutilation, torture, such as Eusebius describes among the sufferers in Palestine, again became the order of the day.

Of the many who suffered under this final persecution of Licinius we shall mention but two examples. Gordius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, who had fled from home to live the life of a hermit, felt a sudden impulse to return and bear testimony to the truth. He found a large group of people assembled in the Circus to witness a spectacle. As he made his way down the steps to the center of the arena, a cry of recognition went up and he was haled before the governor's tribunal. His statement was bold and clear and unequivocal:

"I have come to show how lightly I regard your edicts and to confess my faith in Jesus Christ, and I have chosen this moment, O Governor, because I know your cruelty, which goes beyond that of all other men."

He found only delight in the torture to which he was subjected. In the midst of his intense suffering he said, "The more you torture me, the greater will be my reward. There is a compact between God and us. Every pang and torment that we suffer here will be rewarded there by greater glory and joy."

These words are so distinct an echo of Tertullian that they suggest at least the possibility that he may have been a member of a fanatical and heretical sect, or, at least, strongly influenced by such a sect.

To this same persecution belongs the familiar story of the forty soldiers of the Twelfth Legion, who had refused to offer sacrifice and were stripped and commanded to spend a winter's night on a frozen pond. On the bank of the pond was the building in which the water for the baths of the town was heated. Apparently there was no guard and the soldiers were free to make their way to the warm building, if only they were willing to abandon their religion. At length one of the forty, exhausted by the cold and exposure, yielded to the temptation to seek relief from his suffering by approaching the warmth of the building. Immediately on his arrival there he died as the result of his exposure. The pagan attendant, deeply affected by the endurance and devotion of the thirty-nine who still remained on the ice, cried out, "I too am a Christian," and took the place of the one who had just forfeited the crown of martyrdom. This tale, despite the fact that it has the appearance of folklore, is very well attested.

When the war between Licinius and Constantine was renewed, it was as the avowed enemy of the Christian religion that Licinius entered the conflict. Before he entered battle he is reported to have made a vow utterly to extirpate the religion of Christ. After his defeat and exile, before he met the death penalty, he saw the exiles from Palestine recalled from the mines and heard the shouts of joy of the Christians who had at last won their freedom. We can still read in Eusebius the edict by which Constantine recalled these exiles, restored the property that had been confiscated, offered to reinstate in their proper rank the soldiers who had been expelled from the army in disgrace, or, if they preferred, they might be given a certificate of honorable discharge. By this same edict the corporate possessions of the churches were given back to them. In addition to this, Constantine gave generous gifts to the bishops who had suffered at the hands of his former colleague, and wrote to Eusebius to see that the bishops, priests, and deacons in his district were active and enthusiastic in the Church's work.

With only short periods of cessation the persecution in the East had endured for twenty years. Because the *Acta* of many of the martyrs of this period are late and untrustworthy, and because the actual number of deaths in Palestine as recorded by Eusebius does not seem tremendous, in modern times there has been a tendency to minimize the severity of the persecution. To do this is to fail to recognize that the greater number of those who perished were never recorded by name, and that what Eusebius describes as occurring in Palestine was being repeated at the same time in the many provinces of the East. Determined bigotry united with diabolical ingenuity, reinforced by all the authority and power of the Roman State in the East, to destroy the Church of Christ. It was the last final effort to blot out the Christian religion. Apostasies there were and fanaticism at times provoked the officers of the State to regard their victims as guilty of insubordination and treason. Yet the great body of the Christians showed heroic courage and fortitude and, by enduring torture and death, witnessed to the firmness of their faith. Caesar and the Roman State were incapable of destroying the Church of Christ. Now Caesar, who had embraced the Christian religion, had become master of the whole Roman world. The days of persecution by the State had, at length, come to an end.

Chapter XII

CONSTANTINE AND THE HERESY OF THE ARIANS

After the defeat of Licinius Constantine encountered at once in the Churches of the East several problems that demanded attention if the unity of the Church were to be preserved. In Egypt there was still the Meletian schism which had not yet been healed; the vexed question regarding the time for the celebration of Easter had not yet been satisfactorily solved; but far more serious was the dispute regarding the teachings of Arius, which had spread from Alexandria throughout the East. It would be unjust to attempt to minimize the difficulties that beset the path of the Emperor who had openly professed the Christian religion when he attempted to restore unity of belief among the Christians of the East. The schism of the Donatists had shown him something of the violence and intransigence of the North Africans. This problem, however, was no mere schism. It was one that involved the fundamental teachings of the Church. Constantine was no theologian; his grasp of the Christian religion was quite inadequate to enable him to grapple intelligently with questions that demanded the skill of a professional. Unity was his aim. Was it possible that he, whose will was supreme in all other matters, in the all-important realm of religion alone was no greater than the humblest of his subjects? No predecessor had had to wrestle with a similar problem to enable him to profit by the mistakes or the success of the past. It was almost inevitable that, in attempting to heal the divisions in the Church produced by the teaching of Arius, Constantine should be tempted to overrule the legitimately established authorities of the Church and to assert himself as the self-appointed defender of the Faith. In so doing he would bequeath to the Church a constantly recurring problem, capable of assuming a wide variety of forms, one that would deeply affect the future history of both East and West.

From the early days of her history the contact of the Church with Greek thought had resulted in attempts to explain mysteries of the Faith incapable of human explanation. The love of argument and disputation; the attempt to accommodate divinely revealed truth to human modes of thought; the desire to reduce to syllogistic demonstration apparently irreconcilable aspects of the truth; these were the causes that inevitably gave rise to heresies. They were also the conditions that made it imperative for the Church to define its belief in fixed and definite forms. To many in the modern world the controversies of the fourth century seem a mere meticulous, hair-splitting conflict over terms; an insistence upon a single letter as a test of complete orthodoxy; to Constantine himself the Arian controversy seemed to concern itself with matters that were irrelevant and of little moment, while the dissensions that it engendered were a serious source of weakness, which could only bring disaster in their train. Yet it was absolutely essential that the Church should define what it believed with exactness, and that even tendencies which were ultimately destructive of the very foundations of the Faith should be rejected. The responsibilities and problems of the first Roman Emperor who proclaimed himself a Christian were sufficiently burdensome, but in attempting to exert his influence in the doctrinal differences among Christians, he was adding a problem far beyond his powers.

The Arian heresy had its rise in a period earlier than the activities of Arius. It arose from one of a series of efforts of the Greek mind to reconcile the two truths held by the Church—that there is but one God and at the same time that the Divine Word which is incarnate in Jesus Christ is God, while clearly distinct from the Father. The Gnostics had attempted a solution of this problem which, like a number of other ingenious theories, had had to be condemned, because the Gnostics failed to preserve the integrity of the Faith which the Church had received. While Praxeas, Noetus and Sabellius had ended by identifying the Father and the Son, Theodotus and Paul of Samosata denied that the Son is truly God. Paul, the powerful and clever bishop of Antioch in the last part of the third century, had been a favorite of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra. His wealth and vanities as well as his private life were scandalous; but it was his heresy that caused his deposition, and led to the famous case in which the Emperor Aurelian, acting as judge, gave his verdict that the true bishop was the one recognized in Italy and at Rome, and caused his eviction. The real originator of the Arian heresy was Lucian, a priest of Antioch, who had been included in the condemnation of Paul. He was the head of a school representing the small heretical group that had been partisans of Paul, in which Arius, Eusebius (later bishop of Nicomedia), Maris and Theognis were pupils. Lucian did not go so far in his heretical teachings as Paul had done. He admitted the pre-existence of Christ, but taught that He was a heavenly Being, created before all visible and invisible creatures; in fact, He had created them. But He had not existed from all eternity; He was created by the Father out of nothing, and before that He had no existence. This doctrine, while it was an improvement on the teaching of Paul, and for a time seems to have passed relatively unnoticed, yet was destined to create a tremendous stir in Alexandria after the death of its author, and it was later condemned. Lucian himself, although excluded from communion by the three bishops of Antioch who succeeded Paul, was later able to satisfy Cyrillus, the third of these bishops, and was restored to the priesthood. As a priest he suffered martyrdom in 312, and by his heroic death won for himself the recognition of the Church as one of her martyrs. His tomb at Nicomedia was a center of pilgrimage when Constantine came to the East as Emperor, and Helena, the Emperor's mother, even adopted Lucian as her patron saint.

At the time of Constantine's conversion Arius was a brilliant preacher at Alexandria, who was beginning to attract large congregations to his church by a popular presentation of the theory of Lucian. Alexandria, the great center of learning, the home of Neo-Platonism, was precisely the place to welcome a new theology based on pure reason. Arius was an elderly man, tall and thin, of melancholy aspect whose outward appearance seemed to indicate inner austerities. He dressed as an ascetic, was gentle in speech, persuasive in manner. He had even been considered as a candidate for the episcopal throne of Alexandria on the death of Achillas in 312 or 313, but, although he had been passed over in favor of Alexander, there was apparently no rivalry or ill-feeling between them. He seems to have been fanatically sincere in his views and to have been capable of infecting others with his own enthusiasm. The success of his preaching and the increasing number of his followers could not fail to attract the attention of the Bishop Alexander. After the usual enquiry and consultation the bishop decided that the views of Arius were not consistent with the traditional teaching of the Church, and he was bidden to abandon them. The teaching of Lucian had been only that of a school; Arius was teaching in the name of the Church. When Arius refused to abandon his teaching, he was excommunicated. This was the signal for him to develop a mere dispute between a priest and his bishop into a controversy that was ere long to involve the entire Church. He proceeded to write to his friends, some of whom held positions of eminence in the Church in other parts of the Empire. Among these friends was his one-time fellow-pupil at Antioch, Eusebius, now the bishop of the capital city of Nicomedia, who was in close relation to Constantine and the imperial family. The Bishop of Alexandria likewise wrote to the other bishops. Had Arius and his followers but recognized that their teaching was inconsistent with the traditional teaching of the Church and resigned their positions, the whole future history of Europe and of the East might have been far different.

Encouraged by Eusebius and some of his other friends, Arius proceeded to organize his party, popularizing his peculiar teachings by letters and pamphlets and even by popular songs. Soon all the bishops of the East were in a turmoil. The Bishops of Egypt condemned Arius, while the bishops of the rest of the East rallied to his support. Such was the state of affairs that Constantine encountered when, after the defeat of Licinius in 324, he became sole emperor. If he experienced bitter disappointment and, compelled to recognize his own impotence in his efforts to heal the schism of the Donatists, finally decided that he must abandon them to the judgment of God; this new problem must have filled him with still more intense dismay. To him unity was the one object of paramount importance; in his eyes this turmoil had been roused over matters trivial and negligible. His own grasp of the fundamentals of Christian doctrine was apparently too superficial to enable him to realize its significance or to grapple with subtle theological distinctions.

It is difficult to-day to realize the excitement that pervaded all ranks of society in the cities of the East when the vehement discussion of profound mysteries of the Faith claimed the foremost place in the popular discussions of the man in the street. We are told that sailors and dock-laborers, as well as workers and the idle rabble in the streets, were vociferously discussing the problems of theology and singing the *Thalia,* which Arius had composed to popularize his teachings. As we read this song today it seems to have none of the qualities of a popular ballad. Its opening phrases are:

According to the faith of God's elect,
Who know God,
Holy children, sound in their creed,
Gifted with the Holy Spirit of God,
I have received these things from the partakers of wisdom
Accomplished, taught of God, skilled in wisdom.
In their footsteps do I walk, even I,
I, much spoken of among men,
I, the much-suffering for God's glory;
I, taught of God, have gained wisdom and knowledge.

This song, in a metre designed for banquets and merry-makings, goes on to set forth in summary the whole teaching of Arius with regard to the first two Persons of the Blessed Trinity. A rhetorician of Cappadocia, Asterius by name, who had apostatized during the persecution and was unable to gain restoration to the ranks of the clergy, travelled about the East lecturing and seeking to popularize the new theology of Arius. Eusebius tells us that the quarrels of Arians and Catholics were even exposed to public ridicule in the very theatres of the unbelievers. The Emperor found that he had to deal with a problem of tremendous magnitude.

His first move was to send Hosius of Cordova, the bishop most closely associated with him, to Alexandria. It was probably this meeting that originated the idea of submitting the problem to a council which, for the first time, should be general and not merely local. Hosius carried with him a letter addressed jointly to both Alexander and Arius. Eusebius has preserved a copy of this letter. In it the Emperor states that his purpose is twofold; to bring the diverse judgments regarding the deity to a settled uniformity; and to restore health to the system of the world. Having just settled, as he feels, the controversies that had arisen in Africa, looking for the East, whence the sacred religion has originated, to be the source of its spread, he finds with dismay that in that very part of the Empire there is a controversy about questions that ought not to have been discussed. Such discussions are suggested by the contentious spirit that is fostered by misused leisure; though they may be intended merely as intellectual exercise; they ought to be confined to the region of our own thoughts, and ought not to be produced in popular assemblies nor unadvisedly entrusted to the general ear. The feebleness of our natural faculties and the slowness of our hearers' understanding may reduce the people to either blasphemy or schism. This discussion, Constantine feels, does not concern any of the leading doctrines or precepts of the divine law, and it is no new heresy respecting the worship of God that has arisen. Since both Alexander and Arius are really of one and the same judgment, they may well join in communion and fellowship. So long as the discussion continues regarding matters so trivial and insignificant, it is not fitting that so large a portion of God's people should be subject to their judgment. "Consider," he says, "whether it be right on the ground of some trifling and foolish verbal difference, to assume the attitude of enemies, and that an august meeting of the synod be rent asunder by profane disunion, because of you who are wrangling on points so useless and altogether unessential. This is characteristic of childish ignorance rather than consistent with the wisdom of priests and men of sense. It is possible to maintain unbroken the communion of the whole body, however wide a difference there may be among individuals on so unimportant a matter. We are not all like-minded on all subjects, and there is no such thing as one disposition and judgment common to all alike. Let there be one faith and one understanding and one united judgment with regard to God. Strive for a reconciliation and resume your mutual feelings of friendship, love, and regard. Friendship, after a reconciliation, often becomes sweeter than it was before." Thus the Emperor admonishes the contestants to return to unity, so that he may enjoy quiet days and untroubled nights, for he has been moved to tears and has postponed his intended journey to the East, because of the disturbing news that has come to him. To Constantine the dispute seemed to be concerned with trivialities, but it appeared in quite a different light to the contestants, and the importance of the issue at stake has been realized more and more by thoughtful students in later ages.

The idea of an oecumenical or general council of bishops of the whole Church may have originated in the conference which Hosius of Cordova had with Alexander, but Constantine adopted it and made it his own. The bishops were invited in his name; he provided the facilities for travel which made it possible; he appointed the place of meeting. Nicaea in Bithynia, close to his own capital, Nicomedia, was the place selected. The very name Nicaea, signifying victory, seemed appropriate. There had been numerous great councils in the East before this time, but never had there been a council to which bishops were bidden from all parts of the Empire and from the frontiers. Egypt and the East; all Asia Minor and the provinces beyond the Bosphorus; Pannonia, Gaul, Calabria, Africa, Spain (in the person of Hosius), Rome, the countries on the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Armenia, even Persia, were represented. There is uncertainty with regard to the exact number of those in attendance; the Creed bears the signatures of two hundred and twenty, but, traditionally, there were three hundred and eighteen. Such was the vast assemblage that Constantine expected to restore unity to the Church and, incidentally, to increase his own prestige. A modern historian has said that Constantine "in seeking to reconstitute the Empire by the aid of Christianity, introduced a new disintegrating force, that of theological disputes." This is hardly true, but, in adopting the instrument of the council summoned by the Emperor and conducted under his immediate influence, in attempting to coerce the solution of theological disputes that were already in existence and to compel by his own authority an outward uniformity of belief, he did introduce a disintegrating force replete with potentialities in the creation of increased strife and conflict in the future.

In the Council of Nicaea the world beheld a scene quite unprecedented. Bishops who, but a few years before, had been hunted out for persecution, some of the very ones whose bodies had been tortured and mutilated, now were assembling from all parts of the world on the invitation of the Emperor. They entered the city riding on horses and asses and mules, each bishop accompanied by at least two priests and attended by slaves, while the pack animals brought up the rear. Others perhaps arrived by boats across the Ascanian Lake. The Pope himself was not in sufficiently vigorous health to be able to come, but he sent two priests to represent him. There were men of letters such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Marcellus of Ancyra; there were others, such as James of Nisibis and Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, who were renowned for their virtues; but of the greatest interest to the crowd of Christians and pagans who watched their entrance into the city must have been the confessors. Among them were Paul of Neo-Caesarea in Syria, the tendons of whose wrists had been burned with hot irons, Paphnutius and Potamon from Egypt, both blinded in one eye, and the latter able only to limp, for he had been hamstrung. Then too there were the bishops from Palestine and Syria, who were suspected of heretical inclinations, while Macarius of Jerusalem was known to be a staunch supporter of Alexander. There were the bishops from the nearby provinces of Asia Minor, and, conspicuous among them, Eusebius, the bishop of the imperial city of Nicomedia, later of Constantinople, once the friend of Licinius, and now intimate with Constantia, Constantine's sister and the widow of Licinius. He, as well as Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, and Maris, bishop of Chalcedon, were former pupils of Lucian of Antioch and were known to be friendly to Arius and to his doctrines. Probably unknown to most of those who gazed in wonder at the arrival of this cosmopolitan assemblage was the young deacon but twenty-five years old, who had been trained from boyhood by Alexander in his own house. Now slight and small of stature, but exceptional for his zeal and intellectual cleverness, he was accompanying his bishop and was destined henceforth to be the outstanding antagonist of Arius. This was Athanasius.

If the sight of this throng of Christian bishops and priests entering the delightful city of Nicaea, on the shores of the Ascanian lake, aroused in the populace of the town mingled feelings of amazement, wonder, and curiosity, what must have been the thoughts of the clergy themselves as they gathered? Most of them had suffered persecution. They had seen their companions die at the hands of the Emperor's governors. They, many of them, still bore on their bodies the marks of torture, or in their memories the painful exile at the mines. Now not only was their arrival greeted with enthusiastic acclaim, but still more they were coming openly as the honored guests of the very power that had sought their extermination. Probably the writings of Tertullian were familiar to most of them. It must have occurred to many of them that probably the fiery North African had been mistaken in saying that it was impossible that Caesars could be Christians. At last there was a Caesar who not only publicly proclaimed himself a Christian but who welcomed the bishops of the Church with imperial hospitality.

Constantine was celebrating the twentieth year of his reign. There were festivities to mark this auspicious occasion, at which the bishops and priests from all parts of the world were invited to have their part and to unite in the rejoicings. Eusebius of Caesarea, the historian, pronounced the eloquent tribute to the Emperor in his panegyric. There was a great banquet given by the Emperor for his honored guests, the bishops. As they entered, they were escorted by the soldiers and the guard presented arms. What a transformation had taken place since the days when the soldiers of the Emperor had struck terror into their hearts! Eusebius, in his account of what took place, was so impressed by the appearance of the Emperor that he said but little of the proceedings of the council.

The great hall of the palace was their place of assembly. The Emperor, clad in almost barbaric splendor in his robe of silk adorned with embroidery and precious stones, no enemy of the Christians as his predecessors and colleagues had been, but their patron and host, stood at his place until the bishops beckoned him to be seated. Among his attendants was Hosius of Cordova, the venerable confessor. The bishop nearest the Emperor, perhaps Eusebius of Caesarea, spoke first and expressed to Constantine the appreciation of the assembled clergy. Thus opened the proceedings of the great oecumenical council. Its deliberations were of deepest interest not only to the Christians throughout the world but to the pagan people as well.

The discussion of such a problem as that which constituted the main concern of the council would be a fascinating intellectual exercise to the Neo-Platonists, and it would have the added advantage of in no way endangering the convictions which they held sacred. The Emperor replied to the opening address in Latin, and his words were immediately translated into Greek. Optimistic with regard to the outcome, he urged the assembled clergy to lay aside their differences and, by their unity, to please the Supreme God and confer a great favor on him, their fellow-servant. When the members of the council began to accuse one another and to resort to recriminations, he patiently listened to them all and sought to dispose even the most vehement disputants to a reconciliation; while, by his affable address to all and by his use of the Greek tongue, in which he was not skilled, he appeared in a most pleasing and amiable light, persuading, convincing, praising those who spoke well and urging all to unity of sentiment, until he succeeded in bringing them all finally to one mind and one judgment regarding every disputed subject. Such, at all events, is the optimistic and flattering account given by Eusebius of Constantine's demeanor and influence during the proceedings.

There did appear, at first, to be unanimity. Constantine burned in the sight of the whole assembly the recriminations and petitions which had been handed to him before the council opened. Arius was called upon to offer his defence and expressed his opinions with such frankness that, we are told, as he quoted from the *Thalia*, "the bishops stopped their ears." Eusebius of Nicomedia, his chief supporter, embarrassed by this frankness, urged an examination of Holy Scripture. All would have been glad to adhere strictly to scriptural terms. But Eusebius and his followers were able to turn cleverly every such term suggested, so that it could be made to support the teachings of Arius. Many of those present, particularly the laity, were not familiar with subtle philosophical distinctions. Of such a sort was the confessor, of whom Socrates tells, who, before the first meeting of the council, reproved a group of disputants engaged in preliminary debate, reminding them that Christ and His apostles did not teach us dialectics, art, nor vain subtilties, but simple-mindedness, which is preserved by faith and good works. Finally, the majority were compelled by the evasiveness of the Arian group to seek a formula in other words than those contained in Holy Scripture. This was a bold expedient, and one which they adopted against their will, but it seemed to be forced on them by the rise of a new form of error.

The discussion regarding the formula to be adopted followed. Eusebius of Nicomedia put forth his own formula, which, we are told, was torn to shreds and rejected as heretical. Eusebius of Caesarea proposed a second, which was the creed of his own church, with an addition intended to be a safeguard against the error of Sabellius. This was satisfactory on the basis of Scripture, but was felt to be inadequate. At the prompting of Hosius, the Emperor himself proposed its adoption with the addition of one word, *homoousion,* "of the same substance." This was accepted, but not without much discussion, for it was the very term that had been used by Paul of Samosata half a century earlier to expresss the meaning that the Father and the Son are identical in person. It, therefore, had very unhappy heretical associations for the clergy of the East, and ran foul of the common prejudice against adopting any terms not contained in Holy Scripture. A word which had once been condemned in association with a particular heresy was suspect at least in the minds of some, while in the West this particular word had long been used with the meaning now given to it, and Rome had already used it in an orthodox sense. Now it had the advantage of exactly meeting the particular need of the moment in a way that no other term seemed to have. The influence of Rome would seem to be evident in the adoption by the Easterns of a term which they disliked, but which had Roman use as evidence of its orthodoxy.

The formulary or Creed which thus took shape was read aloud in the presence of the Emperor and of the full assembly by a deacon, Hermogenes, who acted as secretary. It was accepted and signed eventually by all but two, Secundus and Theonas. Eusebius of Nicomedia and a few of the Arian party offered objections, but, at the solicitation of Constantia, complied. Eusebius of Caesarea delayed for a day, and then signed, apparently in deference to the Emperor. He then wrote a letter to his flock to justify his action. The two who remained obdurate were anathematized along with Arius.

Then a fatal precedent was established. The Emperor banished to Illyricum the two bishops who had refused to sign, together with Arius and his immediate associates. It is reported that Secundus, on hearing his sentence of exile, said scornfully to Eusebius of Nicomedia: "You signed to escape exile; but you will be sent into exile too." He and Theognis were soon banished also. The council had disposed of the business it had before it. We shall not linger over the other matters of which it took cognizance. They were settled with little difficulty. At the conclusion of the deliberations the members of the council were entertained by the Emperor at a sumptuous banquet, and it is amusing to be told by Eusebius that all the bishops were present at the dinner, although they had not all been present at the discussions. Constantine gave presents to each of his guests according to his rank. We are told that he reverently kissed the empty eye socket of the crippled confessor Paphnutius. There is an amusing story of Ascesius, the Novatian, who absolutely refused to be turned aside from his deep-rooted convictions. He declared vehemently to the Emperor his firm belief that those who commit a sin after baptism are unworthy to share in the divine mysteries. Constantine listened patiently, and then replied with amused sarcasm: "Very well, then, Ascesius, plant a ladder, and climb up to Heaven alone." The Emperor's final speech is again an exhortation to unity and peace. The bishops should forgive and forget past offences. They should regard the special merit of each as a contribution to the total merit of all. They should leave judgment to God, for their quarrels with one another give their enemies occasion to blaspheme. Were they not to convert the world by the force of their example? He proceeded to enumerate the motives that lead to conversions. This list may be illuminating with regard to some of those who had found their way into the Church in his day, as well as in interpreting his own motives. "Some," he says, "join for what they can get, some for preferment, some to obtain charitable aid, some for the sake of friendship. The true lovers of sound argument are few in number; truly rare is the friend of truth." Christians must be like good physicians, prescribing the remedies for the ailments of each individual. They must not be fanatical, but accommodating. His words unquestionably present his own personal point of view, but they have a deeper significance, in that they represent the effort of the secular state and the secular ruler to influence the Church in the direction of compromise and accommodation. Dismissing the bishops with earnest request for their prayers, Constantine undoubtedly rejoiced that, at his invitation and in his presence, the unity of the Church had been restored.

But his hopes were ere long to be belied. A heresy had been condemned and outwardly unity had been restored to the Church. But the heresy was to survive within the Church. It was to be protected and maintained within the fold that had condemned it. It was to be a fruitful source of disorder and confusion in the future; for now the heretic, after being condemned, had a new court of appeal. He might appeal from the Church which had condemned him to the Emperor who had espoused the cause of the Church. In becoming a Christian Caesar had introduced a new procedure which was unprecedented. The Emperor would henceforth be tempted to exercise an authority that did not lawfully belong to him. Soon we shall find Emperors who enjoy acting as arbiters in the vital concerns of the Church and who will claim that authority as their right.

The assembled Fathers at Nicaea declared all heresy removed from the Church. Yet the real struggle was only beginning. The victory of Nicaea has been called a surprise rather than a solid conquest. A few men who thought clearly had persuaded the group as a whole to condemn Arianism; but many of those who voted for the decrees were not fully convinced about the weapon that was to be used for this purpose. When they arrived home, a reaction was almost certain to come.

In 328 Alexander was succeeded by his deacon Athanasius as bishop of Alexandria. A powerful personality, able and zealous, with unusual prestige, he was able to unify the Church in Egypt and to suppress Arianism. The following year Eusebius returned from his brief exile, was established at Nicomedia, where he had great influence with Constantia, the widow of Licinius and sister of Constantine, who held him in high esteem, and where he won considerable repute at the palace as a man of learning. At Nicaea he had stood firmly with his friend Arius, but, probably because of his proximity to the court, he had felt compelled to sign the Creed of Nicaea, together with the anathemas. His exile had lasted only three years. He was evidently fortunate in having influence that would work for his recall without his being required to retract anything. He soon was able to find high favor with the Emperor, and as long as he lived, for he outlived Constantine and later became bishop of Constantinople, all the force of his influence and ability was expended in advancing the interests of Arianism. His policy was to undermine rather than to attack the decisions of Nicaea. He procured the return of Arius, probably in 330. Ere long he was able to achieve the deposition of the Nicaean leaders. After that new Creeds were put forth, devised to oust that of Nicaea by putting Arianism in an attractive form.

It is said that an Arian priest, whom Constantia recommended to her brother on her death-bed, succeeded in persuading Constantine that Arius had been misrepresented, and so brought about his return. Arius, accompanied by one of his associates in exile, Euzoius, came to Constantinople, and presented to the Emperor a statement of belief that was capable of being reconciled with the Nicaean formula. The Emperor was satisfied and felt that peace had at last been estabished, by the ambiguous statement that Arius made to him, and particularly so, because the statement ended with expressions of a desire for peace. With the Emperor's approval, Arius now returned to Alexandria, but Athanasius refused to receive him. This was the opportunity for the Eusebian party to embarrass him with Constantine.

The efforts of the Arianizing party began to bear fruits. The first step was an attack on Eustathius, bishop of Antioch. On his return from Nicaea he had refused to receive some of the supporters of Arius, who soon organized themselves into a party. Eustathius had the temerity to accuse Eusebius of Caesarea of heresy, and a theological quarrel developed between them which afforded Eusebius of Nicomedia an opportunity to intervene. This was at the synod of Antioch, which was held in 330.

The Eusebians found in their visit to the new church that

Constantine had built in the Holy Land an opportunity to hold this meeting as they passed through Antioch. At Jerusalem the Arianizers united with Eusebius of Caesarea and the partisans of Arius in Syria, to concoct a plan to hold their council against Eustathius (who had cordially received them on the outward journey) in his see city on their return. They accused him of Sabellianism, of seduction, and of having spoken disrespectfully of Helena, the Emperor's mother. All of these accusations were without foundation, but they were sufficient to bring about his deposition and to procure his banishment to Illyricum. Although Eustathius lived for thirty years more, he never returned to Antioch.

The deposition and banishment of Eustathius brought about a schism in the church at Antioch where, despite the fact that there was great devotion to the memory of Lucian, Eustathius had been exceedingly popular. He had to be removed under guard because of the fear of provoking a riot. The see was offered to Eusebius of Caesarea, who declined, Constantine stated, because of the "apostolic canon of the Church" which forbade the translation of a bishop from one see to another—a canon which Eusebius of Nicomedia was only too happy to violate when court influence provided a more desirable place for him. The literary bishop probably declined to be transferred to Antioch because he did not wish to encounter the party feuds which had arisen there. Paulinus of Tyre, who was chosen as Bishop of Antioch, was one of the few bishops who had ventured to defend Arius at Nicaea. He lived only a few months and then Constantine intervened. He congratulated the people of Antioch for expelling Eustathius, comparing their state with a ship that has been cleared of its bilge, and recommended two candidates, for whose orthodoxy he could vouch, thus for the first time in history injecting the influence of the civil power into the election of a bishop. One of his candidates was, of course, chosen. The Arianizing group thus began to hand over to the civil power one prerogative after another, content so long as they could destroy the orthodoxy by which they were condemned.

The next attack was directed against Athanasius. Things seem to have gone quite peacefully for him until the return of Arius to Alexandria. Immediately on his arrival there, Arius made common cause with the adherents of the Meletian schism, who had been for a time separated from the Catholic Church, but had been reunited with the Catholics after the Council of Nicaea, in accordance with the terms there laid down, but who, after the death of Alexander, had failed to come to terms with Athanasius. Eusebius won their assistance with large promises, and then proceeded to write to Athanasius, urging him to receive Arius. When Athanasius refused to do so, Eusebius felt sufficiently strong in his position to write to Constantine, asking him if he meant to be set at nought by a subject. The Emperor wrote to Athanasius demanding that he grant free admission to all who wished to enter the Church. Athanasius again refused. Eusebius had now succeeded in entangling the bishop of Alexandria in difficulties with the Emperor. He next proceeded, in association with the Meletians, to concoct four charges against Athanasius. Three Meletian bishops appeared before Constantine at Nicomedia and charged Athanasius with having taxed Egypt to provide linen vestments for the Church. This charge was immediately refuted by two priests who happened to be at court. Constantine wrote to Athanasius, condemning his accusers, but summoning him to Nicomedia.

The second charge was that Athanasius had sent a purse of gold to a rebel. This accusation the Emperor was able to prove untrue. The third charge consisted of a fabricated tale of a priest, Macarius, whom Athanasius, while on a visitation, had sent to summon to him a certain unauthorized priest who was privately officiating for a few of his relatives. According to the statement prepared by the Meletians, Athanasius had authorized Macarius to overturn an altar and to break a chalice.

The fourth accusation was that Athanasius had murdered Arsenius, a Meletian bishop, and had cut off his hand for purposes of magic. It has been suggested that it was the charge of magic that particularly excited Constantine. He summoned Athanasius to appear for trial before Delmatius, a prince of the imperial house, at Antioch. Before leaving to answer to the imperial summons, Athanasius sent word to the Egyptian bishops to keep a sharp lookout for Arsenius, whom he was reported to have murdered, and sent a deacon to find him. The deacon was able to learn through the arrest of the superior of the monastery where Arsenius had been hiding that the supposedly murdered man had now escaped to Tyre. There he was apprehended by the bishop and "was convicted of being himself." When Constantine learned of this exposure, he put a stop to the proceedings at Antioch, and wrote to Athanasius a letter to be read frequently in public, in which he announced that any further plots on the part of the Meletians would be dealt with "not according to the ecclesiastical, but according to the civil laws."

John Arcaph, the head of the Meletians, who had concocted this tale about Arsenius, confessed his guilt to the Emperor and was graciously forgiven. Arsenius wrote an apology to Athanasius and was restored to communion with the Catholic Church, where he remained permanently for the rest of his life. The tale of the overturned altar and the broken chalice had also been shown to be fictitious. It had been demonstrated that there was no church in the village where the sacrilege was reported to have taken place; there was no chalice there;

Isychras, who was summoned to him, was no priest, was ill in bed at the time of the visitation, and had subsequently, both in person and by letter, confessed to having been compelled by force to play the rôle he had played in these outrageous charges. Once more peace seemed to be restored, but Eusebius and his party continued to return to the same charges against Athanasius at a series of three councils held during the next two years at Caesarea, Tyre, and Jerusalem. It was constantly represented to the Emperor that where there was so much smoke there must be fire. Athanasius refused to attend the council summoned to meet at Caesarea, but when the summons came to appear at Tyre, he set forth with nearly fifty of his assistant bishops.

The council was quite numerous, for those attending it were on a journey to Jerusalem to participate in the consecration of the great church of the Resurrection that Constantine had built there in celebration of the thirtieth year of his reign in 335. In his desire for unity at any price, Constantine had instructed the bishops to settle the Egyptian affair as they went. The council seems to have been attended by about a hundred and fifty bishops, among whom were a strong Arian group headed by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and it contained two young men who were to become, in the next reign, the leaders of Arianism in the West. There was also a large group of malcontents under the leadership of Eusebius of Caesarea. Despite the fact that Athanasius was accompanied by forty-eight of his own assistant bishops, and had a few other friends in the group, he and his supporters were outnumbered by nearly two to one. Demetrius, whom Constantine had sent to act as protector to the council, was apparently not greatly concerned with attempting to secure justice.

Some absurd new charges were preferred against Athanasius, and then the old charges were again brought forward. The climax of the occasion came when the charge of the murder of Arsenius and the tale of the dead man's hand were revived, and were treated as though the story had never been disproved. The accusers produced a black and withered hand which they caused to be passed through the council, declaring that it belonged to the murdered Meletian bishop. Athanasius asked whether any of those present had known the late bishop personally. A number of those present professed to have had personal acquaintance with him. This was Athanasius' opportunity. He beckoned to a man, standing by, who was closely muffled in a cloak, to come forward. "Lift up your head," said Athanasius. As he did so, none other than the murdered Arsenius was revealed. Athanasius proceeded to draw aside the cloak first from one hand and then from the other. "Has God given any man more than two hands?" he quietly asked. The confusion that followed was a momentary triumph, but then, one more clever than the rest claimed that it was not a real man at all, and that Athanasius had produced this counterfeit or illusion by the exercise of magic. Athanasius had to be hurried away from the council, but the council dared not attempt to convict him. Unwilling, however, to admit defeat, a commission was appointed to investigate further the matter of the broken chalice. The six commissioners, who were chosen at a secret session, against which Athanasius protested, were all his personal enemies. They set sail for Alexandria to prosecute their investigations, while Athanasius decided to go direct to Constantinople, and there to appeal to the Emperor for justice. He met Constantine, as he was riding into the city, and stood before him in his path. Constantine describes the scene that ensued in a letter to the bishop of Tyre, in these words:

"As I was returning on horseback to that city which bears my name, and which I regard as my much prospered country, Athanasius, the bishop, presented himself so unexpectedly in the middle of the highway, with certain individuals who accompanied him, that I felt exceedingly surprised at beholding him. God, who sees all things, is my witness, that at first I did not know who he was, but that some of my attendants, having made certain of this and the injustice which he had suffered, gave me the necessary information. I did not on this occasion grant him an interview. He, however, persevered in requesting an audience, and, although I refused him and was on the point of commanding that he should be removed from my presence, he told me with more boldness, that he sought no other favor of me than that I should summon you hither, so that he might in your presence complain of what he had suffered unnecessarily. As this appears reasonable and timely, I deemed it right to address you in this strain, and to command all of you who were convened at the synod of Tyre to hasten to the court of our clemency, that you may demonstrate by your works the purity and inflexibility of your decisions before me, whom you cannot refuse to acknowledge as a true servant of God."

Constantine, who had evidently learned from Dionysius that the council at Tyre had been an outrageous travesty, ordered the bishops to appear at once at Constantinople. The commissioners had, however, already gone to Egypt and had sent in a report, on the strength of which the remaining members of the council had proceeded to condemn Athanasius, and then, proceeding to Jerusalem for the dedication of the new church, had there declared Arius to be a true Catholic and in full communion with the Church. Only the two who bore the name of Eusebius and four others had the courage to obey the summons and appear at Constantinople. Realizing that the old charges were utterly without foundation, they now produced a new accusation before Constantine. They reported to the Emperor that Athanasius was determined to hinder the transportation of Egyptian corn to Constantinople. This was indeed a charge calculated to strike the Emperor on a tender spot. The very thought of an attempt to starve his new capital, a mere suggestion of such a design, was sufficient to demand drastic action. Athanasius, who was devoid of all political ambition, might protest his innocence, but all to no avail. Constantine abruptly banished him to Treves, and he could but obey. Arrived at his place of exile, he was received with all courtesy by Constantine's son, Constantine II, who was at that time Caesar of the West. It would seem quite clear that Constantine did not regard Athanasius as a dangerous intriguer, but deemed it best to banish him in the hope of bringing to an end the interminable disputes which had for so long interrupted his peace of mind.

Athanasius, of course, might have avoided exile by more lenient measures towards the Meletian schismatics and by making the way of return more easy for the defeated minority at Nicaea. But, although in later life he became a peace-maker, he was at this time the militant champion of that which was right, and his uncompromising nature would not suffer him to cease fighting. His exile was not a painful one, as the guest of a bishop at Treves, who was a staunch adherent of the creed of Nicaea, and "supplied with all necessities," by the generosity of the younger Constantine, he had an interval of repose for two years before renewing the struggle.

Arius remained at court. Recalled by imperial favor, the council at Tyre now made it possible for him once more to enter the doors of the Church. He is even reported to have returned to Alexandria, but his presence there is said to have been the occasion of such commotion that he was recalled to Constantinople.

Marcellus of Ancyra, the most zealous of the Easterners against the Arians, was the next victim of the cabal of Eusebius.

He had refused to share in the proceedings at Jerusalem, and for this was accused of disrespect to the Emperor. Doctrinal charges against him followed. Athanasius and the Nicaeans, as well as Pope Julius defended him. But the Eusebians were successful in bringing about his condemnation. At the Council of Constantinople in 336, he was deposed, and another bishop was put in his place. Now that the Eusebians had satisfactorily disposed of all their chief opponents, they were in a position to bring about the reinstatement of Arius. Summoned to Constantinople, his triumph was all but realized. His arrival at the capital had been the signal for demonstrations on the part of rival factions. The bishop, who was no Arian, hesitated. By now the bishops from the council of Jerusalem had made their way to Constantinople, determined to see their decisions given the force of law. The Emperor gave them his assistance. The Catholics prayed that the catastrophe might be averted. The day was appointed and the church was chosen for what was to be an impressive ceremony. On the very eve of the day appointed for his reception into the Church, whose faith he had attempted to undermine, Arius suddenly died. Gibbon says that we have the choice of a miracle or of poisoning to account for the sudden demise of Arius. Newman says that it was probably a miracle. Yet sudden deaths have occurred too frequently from natural causes to justify any certainty with regard to the end of Arius. Within a few months the Emperor Constantine too was dead. His efforts to intervene in the struggle between Arius and Athanasius had ended in failure and defeat and resulted in a legacy of calamities destined to afflict the Church for many years. Uninstructed in the Faith himself, he attempted to preserve the welfare of the Church and public order at the same time and inevitably fell into adopting a policy of expediency which rendered him an easy prey to the machinations of an unscrupulous clique headed by the Bishop of Nicomedia. The very methods employed by this group, which must have been obvious to him, should have made him hesitate to yield to their influence. It was impossible for a great military leader and administrative reformer to remain indifferent to the controversies that jeopardized the internal life of the Church. He intervened because he regarded it as his function to protect the Faith, not to define it. But, in so doing, he became ultimately the tool of Eusebius of Nicomedia and his associates, and the Christian Faith as accepted by them became authoritative for him. It was under their influence that he again fell into the fundamental error of failing to appeal to Rome, which was the traditional court to adjudicate such problems. Through the reign of Pope Sylvester, the Papacy was ignored. Despite all efforts to coerce Rome, its decisions in the past had clearly shown that it was the pillar of orthodoxy and the only center of influence that could unite the Church in loyalty to its traditional teaching. Through Constantine's failure to recognize this fact and his acceptance of the guidance of an unscrupulous group under the leadership of a court prelate, he prepared the way for still more vicious methods in the reign of his son, who would decide not only to "protect" the Faith, but also to decide for himself what was the true faith that was worthy of his protection. Constantius II, although he was not baptized, became the champion of the Arians.

Through the influence of Constantius Athanasius was again exiled and his place at Alexandria was given to an Arian. The Eusebians had resorted to the traditional appeal to Rome, which Constantine had discarded, but they did so only in the hope of making this appeal serve their own ends. When the Pope summoned them to a council at which Athanasius and the bishops of the East, who had suffered at the hands of the Eusebians, were to be present, they replied in threatening and sarcastic terms, refusing to attend the very council for which they had asked, unless the decisions of Tyre and various other depositions they had decreed were recognized. This declaration of the Eusebian bishops is the first instance of an open denial of the primacy of Rome and is coupled with the threat of rebellion in the effort to coerce the Pope's exercise of his prerogatives.

It is beside our purpose to relate the subsequent developments in the Arian controversy. Ere long the party of Arius, with the connivance of Constantius will hold councils at which the Emperor will preside and only those who deny the traditional faith will be in attendance. The Church will "groan to find itself Arian." Only a few years after the death of Arius the association with his name will cease to be a mark of honorable distinction and his followers will dissociate from it their vague and nebulous formula. Yet the struggle will continue. Arianism more and more will gain the ascendency. The East will be cut off from the West. The interference of the Emperor will continue to impede the free functioning of the Church and will seek to impose Arianism on the orthodox. The struggle will persist unabated for a long time before the final withdrawal of the Arians from the Church. In the meantime the barbarous nations beyond the frontiers will have accepted the teachings of Arius instead of those of Nicaean orthodoxy. Far from producing the unity and peace he so desired, Constantine's methods had sown the seeds of strife and discord. Eusebius of Nicomedia, translated to Constantinople in defiance of all Church law, had been an ill-chosen adviser, whose bequest, after sixteen years of episcopal activity, was a divided Church, a series of unjust depositions, and a hostility between East and West which would, in the course of time, become permanent. Court influence had produced a dangerous and intriguing prelate, the first of a long series destined to play a dangerous and vicious rôle in the new capital of the East. Well might those who had read the writings of Tertullian now ask if he had not been right. Could Caesars be Christians?

The Arian controversy is not an edifying chapter in the history of the Church. The violence and intrigue that characterized the councils make many of the bishops of the period appear in a most unfavorable light. It must be remembered, however, that the bishops came to Nicaea merely as witnesses to the Faith. The very qualities which discredit some of them as judges and make them appear as unedifying Pastors of the Christian flock make them, perhaps, even better witnesses. They attended councils not to be the sources of the Faith, but to witness to it.

The discussions at these councils and the hostilities that developed from them have seemed to many thoughtful persons in modern times to have arisen from matters which actually were, as indeed they appeared to Constantine to be, irrelevant and trivial as compared with the peace of the Church which they so seriously disrupted. Such a judgment is, however, superficial unless the Christian religion itself be regarded as of little moment. Only if the Christian religion itself be trivial and insignificant, can the question of the deity of Christ be regarded as unimportant. Arianism was the first great heresy to spring from a Christian root. Its source was the first article of the Creed of the Christians. Gnosticism had been dangerous, but it had originated in heathenism and had been purely oriental in temper. Arianism was zealous to maintain a rigid monotheism, yet, in relegating Christ to the category of created beings, it made Him in reality a demi-god. Therefore, strange as it may seem, it was actually the last refuge of a dying polytheism. It achieved great popularity, for it lent itself readily to the quibbling logic and love of argument, which made the discussion of theological problems one of the amusements of the age. It made a specious boast to adhere strictly to the words of the New Testament, which it made the exclusive claim to interpret precisely. It seemed to escape the difficulties inherent in any attempt to explain in simple human language the concept of a threefold life within the divine Unity. But it must not be forgotten that the Arians claimed to worship Christ, and they were therefore addressing divine worship to one whom they acknowledged only as a creature. It was this devotion to one who was really a demi-god that made a most congenial appeal to the minds of half-converted pagans. It is this kinship with polytheism that explains the ready acceptance of Arianism by nearly all the barbarian peoples who later called themselves Christian. Superficially it appeared to be Christian, but actually it was destructive of every distinctive Christian doctrine. In the Arian Christ, who was something less than God, there could be no fulness of revelation, no redemption, no sacramental grace, and through him could come no divine Holy Spirit.

The danger encountered by the Church in this great crisis, and the paramount importance of preserving orthodoxy even at the expense of rousing turbulent emotions and violent polemics for the sake of a word, or even of a single letter, has never been more succinctly expressed than in the words of G. K. Chesterton:

"It was only a matter of an inch, but an inch is everything when you are balancing. The Church could not afford to swerve a hair's breadth about some things, if she was to continue her great and daring experiment of the irregular equilibrium. Once let one idea become less powerful and some other idea would become too powerful. It was no flock of sheep the Christian shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideals and devouring doctrines, each one of them strong enough to turn to a false religion and lay waste the world. . . . If some small mistakes were made in doctrine, huge blunders might be made in human happiness. . . . A slip in the definitions might stop all the dances; might wither all the Christmas trees or break all the Easter eggs. Doctrines had to be defined within strict limits, even in order that man might enjoy general human liberties. The Church had to be careful, if only that the world might be careless. The Church left on the one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an Orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly."

Arianism showed a vitality almost incredible. It barely escaped overwhelming the whole Empire in both East and West. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Council of Nicaea saved both Christianity and monotheism. Might not its definitions have been more speedily fruitful and more generally effective, had it been free from the patronage and the influence of the Christian Emperor?

Chapter XIII

CONSTANTINE'S MURDERS

Within a few months of the close of the Council of Nicaea Constantine went to Rome to be in attendance at the celebrations which marked the twentieth year of his reign and the tenth anniversary of the elevation of his sons Crispus and Constantine to the rank of Caesar. We have last seen him as host to the bishops and other clergy who had assembled from all parts of the Empire, in eirenic spirit burning the recriminations that had been handed to him before the opening of the council, benevolently eager to overlook grievances, indulging in pleasantry and generously bestowing gifts at the sumptuous banquet that he provided for his revered guests, reverently kissing the empty eye-socket of the confessor and expressing his deepest concern for the welfare of the Church and for the attainment of reconciliation and peace. It is very difficult to reconcile this picture with that of the unhappy, gloomy, suspicious Constantine whom we see at Rome during the next year.

Constantine was not yet an old man. He had completed less than fifty years. He had been the most successful warrior of his age and now, after the defeat of all his rivals, he was able to enjoy the fruits of his victories. In the final victory over Licinius his son Crispus, not the son of Fausta, but of his morganatic wife Minervina, had played a conspicuous part. Only an unnatural parent could fail to rejoice and to feel a justifiable pride in the attainments of a son who had already distinguished himself on the Rhine, and whose loyalty as well as prowess had been so recently made evident in his naval victories in the

Hellespont. Constantine was generally reported to be a good father as well as a good husband. During his younger days he had been praised repeatedly as a paragon of the domestic virtues. One of his panegyrists admired him inordinately for his early entrance into the married state and for following the example of his father in consenting to accept the responsibilities of parenthood. Another panegyrist had found him particularly deserving of commendation for yielding himself to the laws of matrimony as soon as he ceased to be a boy. From his early manhood he appears to have been one who easily fell under the sway of a woman, and with whom feminine influence was always strong. This quality must not be forgotten when we attempt to unravel the dark mysteries of this year at Rome.

We may be quite certain of two conditions that contributed to his unhappiness at this time. On October 1, 325, he issued an edict in which he urged informers of every sort to accuse his magistrates, ministers, friends, and even his most intimate favorites, with the assurance that he would personally listen to their charges and avenge his injuries. He concluded with the prayer that the Supreme Divinity would continue to protect the safety of the Empire and the Emperor. It is obvious that he had grounds, whether real or imaginary, for suspecting plots against him and for fearing that these plots were to be attributed to those who were very close to his person. His Vicennalia might provide the opportunity for putting such plots into execution. The same danger that had existed for so long before the establishment of the tetrarchy by Diocletian was evidently again threatening the stability of his office. These suspicions could only beget morbid fears and dismal imaginings. The other obvious reason for Constantine's unhappiness was the hostile paganism of Rome. When he had entered the ancient capital as the liberator from the tyranny of Maxentius, both Senators and populace had welcomed him with enthusiasm. Now that the intervening years had made manifest his increasing favors to the Christians, and his identification of himself with their interests had increased their numbers and influence, the pagan hostility became articulate. There is a story told at a later time by St. Chrysostom that Constantine, on being told that his statue had been pelted with stones and his whole face battered and disfigured, replied with a smile, as he stroked his face with his hand, "I am not able to perceive any wound that has been inflicted upon my face. Both the head and the face appear quite sound." This event is almost certainly to be referred to the time of his visit to Rome to celebrate his Vicennalia, but the Emperor's mild words were probably but a weak attempt to veil his real feelings and to appear to make light of the bitter hostility of his pagan subjects.

Only a few days after the Emperor's arrival came the Ides of Quintilis, the anniversary of the battle of Lake Regillus, when the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, were reputed to have fought for Rome and to have borne the tidings of victory to the city. A grand muster of the Equestrian order in honor of the Dioscuri, had, from ancient times, been a part of the festal ceremony that marked the day. In the days of ancient glory it had been one of the most resplendent pageants that Rome celebrated. It can best be visualized through the familiar lines of Macaulay:

"Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
  Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride in all their pride,
  Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows
  Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum
  To Mars without the wall.

Each Knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crowned;
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Shall have such honour still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
December's Nones are gay:
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day."

Probably it was but a sorry survival of this once impressive ceremony that Rome beheld during Constantine's visit in 326, but it was still precious to the populace of the city, even though its glamour and its significance belonged now to the past. The Emperor not only refused to participate in the religious rites which formed a part of the celebration but he is also reported to have gazed with scorn on the tawdry Knights and to have spoken sarcastically of the meaningless ceremony. The result was rioting and open hostility to the Emperor who called himself a Christian.

If we are to try to understand the grim events of this year of unhappiness, we must remind ourselves of those who made up the Emperor's household and of the situation that existed in his family at this time. Fausta, his wife, now had children of her own. Constantine, the eldest, was still a mere lad of about ten years, while his younger brothers, Constantius and Constans, were small children. Constantine, her oldest son, had not been born until eight years after her marriage, while the three daughters, if all three of them had been born by this time, must have been little more than infants. In Crispus, the successful admiral and able governor in Gaul, she must have seen a serious obstacle to the careers of her own sons. Probably no thought could be more distasteful to her than that of the son of a lowly and repudiated marriage succeeding to the imperial power to the prejudice of her own offspring. We know little of Fausta's temperament or of her character, but we do know that once she had saved her husband's life when it was threatened by her own father. We also know much about the character of that father—ambitious, unrelenting in his determination to rule, perfidious and violent in his nature. Fausta had before her the example of his unscrupulous methods in the pursuit of his dynastic aims. Her sons Constantine and Constantius were later to show some of the same traits as their maternal grandfather. Of the latter Ammianus Marcellinus reports that he was a silent, imperturbable man, who kept his gaze ever straight before him, who trusted no one and shared his authority with none.

The Emperor's mother, Helena, was also living in Rome during this year. We are told that she was converted to the Christian religion by her son, whose relations with her appear to have been very intimate and affectionate as long as she lived. Helena was now enjoying a position that was in striking contrast to her lowly origin. Eusebius relates that her son honored her so completely with imperial dignities that, in every province and even in the ranks of the soldiery, she was given the titles of Augusta and Empress, and that her likeness was impressed on golden coins. As a matter of fact, her likeness has been found on coins of silver and copper, but on no golden coins. Helena had her residence at Rome at the Sessorium, not far from the Lateran palace where now the Church, to which she brought many treasures from the Holy Land, still retains the memory of her pilgrimage thither, not only in the relic of the Cross which is treasured there, but also in its very title of

"The Holy Cross in Jerusalem." Although now nearly eighty years of age, Helena was still sufficiently vigorous to undertake the arduous pilgrimage the following year, and Eusebius bears testimony to her youthful alacrity. He also tells of her great devotion to her grandsons, to whom she bequeathed her possessions. Of her strength of character and of the powerful influence she was able to exert over her devoted son, there can be no question.

There was also another woman of the imperial family who was in residence at Rome at this time, who was apparently in close contact with the Emperor. That was his half-sister, Constantia, the widow of Licinius, who interceded with her brother for her husband's life at the time of his defeat. Although she had won the boon she sought, Licinius had soon forfeited it through his inability to avoid intrigue. Constantia was unquestionably the one whose influence was chiefly responsible for the ascendency of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Despite the fact that his evasiveness, his ambitions, and his connivance in the unscrupulous methods used in the effort to discredit and incriminate Athanasius, all must have been evident to Constantine, yet, through the influence of this half-sister of the Emperor, Eusebius was constantly rising to greater heights of influence and favor. The complete reversal of Constantine's policy with regard to Arius is, without doubt, to be attributed to her, and it is also quite likely that she had considerable influence in bringing about the exile of Athanasius. It should not be forgotten that she was the daughter of Constantius Chlorus, not by Helena, but by Theodora, the step-daughter of Maximian Herculius.

When Constantine came to Rome to celebrate his anniversary in 326, he must have remembered the circumstances of Diocletian's visit there at the expiration of a like period in his reign. His had been a very unhappy experience, which terminated in his hasty departure from the uncongenial atmosphere of the old capital, followed by his prolonged illness. Then came his abdication, probably not entirely voluntary, but undoubtedly to a considerable extent influenced by Galerius. Constantine too found the atmosphere of Rome uncongenial. Ere long it appeared definitely hostile. No thought of abdication was in his mind when he came there to celebrate his Vicennalia, but perhaps there were evidences that some one was plotting to force him to relinquish his power. He had become sole ruler of the Empire as the result of a series of difficult contests. Not only had he no thought of abandoning his position now, but he had a definite purpose still before him—to unify the Empire under a Christian Emperor. We cannot know just what were his suspicions, or what were the evidences of hostile intrigue that induced him to establish so elaborate a system of espionage at this time. He had already had sufficient examples of duplicity in Maximian Herculius, Licinius, and Bassianus to make him exceedingly wary, and susceptible to every suggestion of the existence of plots against him. We only know the facts. His son Crispus was put to death. After an interval the Empress Fausta met a like fate. Other deaths, including that of the young Licinius Licinianus, followed. It is the cumulative force of these tragedies that has served to condemn Constantine in the eyes of most modern historians. Any one of them, considered by itself, might be accounted for by circumstances which, if they did not justify the deed, might at least tend to palliate the guilt of the Emperor. The series of deaths has, however, covered the name of Constantine with shame and degradation.

Let us consider the evidence. The contemporary Christian writers offer no assistance towards the solution of the problem. Lactantius brought his work *On the deaths of the Persecutors* to an end with the triumph of Licinius over Maximin

Daia. Eusebius ended his *History of the Church* with the victory of Constantine over Licinius and his concluding words are an extravagant eulogy of "Constantine, the most mighty victor, adorned with every virtue of piety, together with his son Crispus, a prince most beloved of God, in all respects like to his father." In his so-called *Life of Constantine* there is no mention of the deaths of Crispus and Fausta. It is, of course, possible that Constantine himself, who gave the story of the vision of the Cross directly to Eusebius, may also have told him the extenuating circumstances which caused Eusebius to feel justified in making this omission. Or, as seems more likely, Eusebius was devoting his pen to setting forth the political ideas that were to be the background of the revived and Christianized Empire that Constantine was about to establish. These sordid tales of domestic tragedy would have no place in such a scheme.

Our earliest information comes from the pagan writers. Eutropius states that through the pride of prosperity Constantine "departed from his former agreeable mildness of temper. Falling first of all upon his own relatives, he put to death his own son, an excellent man, his sister's son, a youth of amiable disposition; soon afterwards his wife, and later numerous friends." The Anonymous Valesianus makes no mention of any of these deaths. Zosimus, who seems to be followed by the *Epitome* of Aurelius Victor and by John the monk in the *Life of St. Artemius,* is the first one to attempt to tell the whole story. His account, which is the most accusatory, is as follows:

"Now that the whole Empire had fallen into the hands of Constantine, he no longer concealed his evil dispositions and vicious inclinations. . . . When he came to Rome he was filled with pride and arrogance. He decided to begin his impious actions at home, for he put to death his son Crispus, on suspicion of debauching his mother-in-law [step-mother]

Fausta, without any regard to the ties of nature. And when his own mother Helena expressed deep sorrow for this atrocity, lamenting the young man's death with great bitterness, Constantine, pretending to comfort her, applied a remedy worse than the disease. For, causing a bath to be heated to an exceeding great temperature, he shut up Fausta in it, and a short time later took her out dead."

The statement in the *Epitome* of Sextus Aurelius Victor is more brief:

"At the suggestion of his wife Fausta, as men think, Constantine ordered his son Crispus put to death. Then, since his mother Helena upbraided him, because of her excessive grief for her grandson, he slew Fausta his wife, who was hurled into a hot bath."

From Ammianus Marcellinus we learn only that Pola was the place where Crispus was put to death.

When we arrive at the later writers the information appears to become more definite, but it is very doubtful if it is more trustworthy. The Arian Philostorgius says that Constantine "was led on by the fraudulent artifices of his step-mother (Fausta) to put his son Crispus to death, and, afterwards, detecting her in the act of adultery with one of his *cursores* (grooms), he ordered her to be suffocated in a hot bath. Later Constantine was poisoned by his brothers in atonement for the death of Crispus."

To add to the complications of this involved situation Zosimus also states that Constantine II, Constantius and Constans were not the sons of Fausta, but of another woman, whom he had put to death for adultery.

When we turn to the later Christian writers we find St. Jerome testifying to both the deaths, but under the wrong year. Sozomen, in attempting to refute the story related by Zosimus that Constantine's adoption of the Christian religion was due to his desire to expiate his guilt after the murder of his son, speaks of him as merely assenting to his death, as though it had been a thing planned by others in which he reluctantly acquiesced. Sidonius Apollinaris states that Crispus was put to death by cold poison and Fausta by a hot bath. He also gives us the couplet, attributed to Ablavius, which he says was affixed to the gates of the Palatine:

"Saturni aurea saecla quis requirit?
Sunt haec gemmea, sed Neroniana."

"Who asks for Saturn's Age again?
We have the jewels of Nero's reign."

Gregory of Tours merely repeats the statement of Sidonius with the explanation that they had plotted to betray Constantine's rule. The later writers such as Codinus, with his tale of the golden statue of Crispus erected by Constantine at Constantinople with the inscription: "To my son unjustly slain"; Zonaras with his story of the mad love of Fausta for Crispus, which, because he failed to reciprocate, led her to compass his death, are unlikely to embody a trustworthy tradition.

What are we to make of this hopelessly involved tangle? The theories have been as manifold as have been the legends of Constantine and the interpretations of his character. The silence of Eusebius has been regarded as an attempt to conceal the deep guilt of his hero. The most sinister interpretation has been given each most incriminating statement, from whatever source. Helena, the mother of Constantine, of whom we know nothing but what is good, has been represented as the avenging Agrippina, who arrives in haste from the Orient to demand the death of Fausta. Again the ingenious theory has been devised that it was not the Emperor's mother, but Helena, the supposed wife of Crispus, who hastened to Rome in her fury to uncover the guilt of the modern Phaedra who had attempted to seduce the innocent Hippolytus and, failing in her attempts, had accused him to his father as having made advances to her. Ingenuity and prejudice have found an ample field in the scanty evidence that has survived regarding the mysterious tragedies of Constantine's unhappy year at Rome. Gibbon has made the execution of Licinius Licinianus inordinately brutal and tragic. He tells us that "the stern jealousy of Constantine was unmoved by the prayers and entreaties of his favorite sister pleading for the life of a son, whose loss she did not long survive." This statement would seem to have little to justify it, for the continued close relations between the Emperor and his sister can only be explained on the theory that the Licinius who was put to death was not the very young son of Constantia, who would not yet have been of sufficient age to constitute a menace to the authority of Constantine; but the illegitimate son of Licinius by a slave woman, whom Constantia had been required to adopt that he might be a recognized heir to his father. He would have been of an age that might have made it possible for a party of malcontents to choose him as their candidate.

The attempts to prove the complete innocence of Constantine have been quite as fanciful and have not proved successful. None of the Christian writers in the years that followed attempted to assert his innocence. St. Chrysostom does not mention the emperor by name when, in a homily to the Philippians, he illustrates the dangerous effects of prosperity by the tale of a sovereign who exposed naked on a mountain his wife whom he suspected of adultery, one who had become the mother of several royal sons; and then adds the statement that the same emperor slew his own son. Although the manner of the death is a novelty, the allusion is obvious. A monody, for a long time ascribed to Julian, supposed to lament the death of

Constantius, refers to his mother's virtue and beauty and gifts, and implies that she is still alive and about to hear the sad news of the death of her son. Although this monody was accepted by a number of outstanding historians including Ranke, it has now been ascribed to a much later period, and really refers to the death of a Byzantine emperor of the fifteenth century. The attempts that were made, on the basis of this monody, to prove that Fausta was not put to death, but was still living at the time of the death of Constantius II, are now without support and such a theory is, of course, quite untenable.

The attempt to implicate Helena, the mother of Constantine, in his guilt is, however, the most groundless and at the same time the most absurd of the many extraordinary theories that have developed about these murders. It has been quite usual to paint her as the jealous rival of Fausta who, once she had been worsted, must needs have her revenge. The tale of her having undertaken her pilgrimage to the Holy Land as an expiatory penance for her misdeeds is quite imaginary. The pagan writers, Zosimus and those who follow his tradition, find apparent delight in chronicling the domestic tragedies of Constantine, and associate with these crimes the entirely disproved legend that the Emperor became a Christian because in the Church alone could he obtain absolution, while paganism knew no forgiveness for crimes so execrable. Sozomen indicates the complete ignorance of pagan legends that such a tale implies. It is seriously to be questioned whether it was the crimes of Constantine that produced his restless activity in building churches. Still more unlikely is it that Helena's pilgrimage to the Holy Land was in the nature of a penance for her misdeeds. It is, however, quite possible that sorrow over the tragedies she had witnessed may have had some relation to her journey. We know that Helena had a particular attachment for her first grandson. It would be but natural that the repudiated wife of Constantius should have a most tender regard for the son of Minervina, who had likewise been repudiated to make way for a dynastic marriage. The execution of her favorite grandson must have caused her poignant grief; the crime of her devoted son, whatever its apparent justification, could not fail to fill her soul with bitterness. Moreover it was probably from this son that she had come to accept the Christian religion. There can be no question about the intensity of her suffering. But to regard her as the one who incited this same son to murder his lawful wife is indeed a presumptuous inference from quite insufficient evidence. To interpret her upbraiding Constantine and reproaching him for the death of Crispus as an attempt to stir up such resentment against Fausta, who had incited him to that first murder, that it would lead to her death as the natural sequence, is to accept conclusions for which no evidence exists.

There is but little to be deduced from the coins of the period that can contribute towards the interpretation of the confused evidence of the chroniclers. It is true that, despite the fact that we know that Crispus had Lactantius for his tutor, and that the late Byzantine writer Cedrenus states that he died a Christian, Constantine and Crispus had pagan inscriptions on their coins after 317. *Iovi Conservatori* and *Soli Invicto Comiti* continue to appear after the *labarum* has found its place on the coinage. It is, of course, quite possible that these were coined by pagan cities and merely had the Emperor's approval for circulation. It is, however, also possible that Crispus was not in a real sense a Christian, and that he was not unwilling to throw in his lot with a pagan party that promised to satisfy his ambitions. Probably more significance is to be attached to the fact that the sign of the Constantinople mint appears on the coins of all the members of the imperial family who survived the foundation of the new capital, while the sign never is found in the series of either Crispus or Fausta. The coinage would seem to provide ample evidence for the deaths of both Crispus and Fausta before the appearance of the sign of Constantinople.

Now we may attempt, with the scanty and confusing evidence in mind, to reconstruct what probably happened during this fateful year at Rome. Constantine made his way through his birthplace Naissa, Sirmium, Aquileia, and Milan, arriving in Rome just before the celebration of the Ides of Quintilis, the middle of July. His mind was already disturbed with suspicions and fears. These may have been planted there by the ill-advised words of some of his trusted counsellors; by some evidence of the existence of a strong party of pagans such as was certain to arise after the defeat of Licinius, their champion, and to be incited to greater activity by the rôle the Emperor had played at the Council of Nicaea; or reports may have come to him that Crispus, elated by his success in the Hellespont and the prominent place he had occupied in the victory over Licinius, had been stirred to inordinate ambition and had perhaps let fall some indiscreet or injudicious word which, when reported to his father, may have been greatly magnified. Now that Constantine had attained the apex of his power, suspicious fears of treachery and revolt had already induced him to establish an elaborate system of espionage. He had had a long experience of treachery. Now he scented intrigue in the very atmosphere. Whatever disquieting rumors were brought to him were certain to be magnified in his own mind. He may even have been to a degree mentally unbalanced during that year. Such an affliction is not uncommon among absolute monarchs.

Arrived at Rome he was at once conscious of a militant paganism almost at the point of revolt. Personal affronts were offered to him and to his statues. If he gave scandal to the pride of the Senators and the traditions of the populace by his indifference to their ancient ceremonies, he received in turn scorn and open defiance from some of his subjects. The suggestion may have come from one or from many sources, from within or without his own household, but whatever its source or the grounds on which it was based, he may well have received the impression that a discontented and rebellious paganism in both East and West was looking towards the alert and capable young Crispus as its potential champion. There is some evidence that Crispus had already been supplanted as Caesar in Gaul, which his father preferred to entrust to the superior wisdom and wider experience of the young Constantine, now perhaps as much as nine or ten years of age.

There were probably two parties within the imperial household. It is inconceivable that Fausta should not have been ambitious for her own sons and fearful of the popularity of Crispus. The fact that Crispus too had a following in the capital is evident from the distich which later appeared recalling the crimes of Nero. It is also evident that the women of the dynastic house had now acquired an importance unknown before the time of Diocletian. The widow of Galerius had been demanded by Maximin Daia as his bride; by Licinius she had been put to death. Licinius had also had the children of Galerius, Daia and Severus executed. There could not fail to be a distinction in the eyes of Fausta between her own sons and the son of the repudiated Minervina. We cannot know what the turmoil of accusation, insinuation, and intrigue that surrounded the Emperor may have been. From all the available evidence it would appear that Constantine, despite the achievements of his first-born son and his apparent loyalty in the past, was persuaded by malicious accusers that this same son had now become a seditious rival dangerous both to him and to the security of the State. He consented to his imprisonment at

Pola. Then, although Crispus had had no opportunity to make his defence in the presence of his father, the repeated calumnies of Fausta and her supporters continued to aggravate his suspicions and ultimately to convince him of the guilt of his son, to whose execution (by what means we do not know), he reluctantly consented.

Then followed a period of grief and remorse. The sorrow of his mother and her rebukes drove the distracted Emperor to the point of madness. He may have learned that the charges against Crispus were groundless. The part played by Fausta in bringing about the death of Crispus may have become evident to her husband. The charge of adultery may have been proved, or at least made to appear plausible, to her husband. Fausta's death, probably in a bath of overheated water, followed. One modern writer, unduly charitable to the memory of Constantine, has suggested that her death may have been accidental. This is an unwarranted assumption. It seems obvious that, if, as is likely, Fausta was condemned on a charge of adultery, Constantine was but carrying out the penalty prescribed in a law which he had recently caused to be enacted. Even had she not been guilty of adultery, it is probable that the Emperor was the victim of a wife who had inherited the insatiable ambitions of her father and who had, by her machinations, contrived to make his son appear guilty of disloyalty and intrigue. If these charges had been now disproved, her own treachery would enhance her guilt.

We are quite without trustworthy evidence with regard to these two tragedies. We have attempted, on the basis of the uncertain and divergent evidence that does exist, to describe what probably took place. Jealousy, ambition, hatred all entered into this palace tragedy. Disloyalty, conspiracy, adultery may have played their parts as well. The story of Zosimus seems too close a parallel with the classic tale of Phaedra and

Hippolytus to be taken seriously. Yet it is not impossible that Fausta may have attempted to compass the destruction of Crispus by falsely accusing him, only to be shown up in her true colors after she had achieved her purpose. Some modern historians have found sufficient extenuating circumstances to enable them to exonerate Constantine to a great extent with regard to these two deaths, but have found the death of the young Licinius Licinianus impossible to condone. Yet if, as seems likely, he was an older son of Licinius, adopted to make him a legitimate heir, the suspicion aroused by his father would involve him as well, and, if it be true that Crispus had married Helena, the daughter of Licinius, he would, without question, be involved in any conspiracy that centered about Crispus.

This was Constantine's last visit to Rome. The tradition of crime, intrigue, ambition and conspiracy was deep-rooted in the Empire. Constantine had learned to his sorrow that it was all but impossible in these conditions that Caesar should live the life of a Christian.

Chapter XIV

CONSTANTINE AND HIS CITY

Second only to his acceptance of the Christian religion in the influence that it was to exert on the future of Europe and the world, was Constantine's decision to establish a new capital and to transfer the imperial court to New Rome at the mouth of the Bosphorus, in Europe, but on the very edge of Asia Minor. Unsurpassed in the whole Empire was the situation of Byzantium. For nearly a thousand miles Europe and Asia are separated by the Black Sea and the Aegean, both of great magnitude and dividing the two continents by a broad expanse of water. But between the two great seas the ancient Hellespont (Dardanelles) and the Propontis (Sea of Marmora) narrow down so that for a continuous stretch of more than two hundred miles the two continents are clearly visible the one from the other. As one sails northward from Byzantium to the Black Sea through the Bosphorus, a winding course of nearly sixteen miles, the average width of the sea that separates the two continents is about three-quarters of a mile. Throughout the entire journey from the lower Aegean to the Black Sea in ancient times on either side there was a succession of Greek cities. The situation of Byzantium on the Sea of Marmora lies in the path of all the commerce that played so important a part in the life of these cities in ancient times, while the narrow Bosphorus on the north and the Hellespont on the south provided protection for this vantage point, at which the great trade routes between the two continents crossed.

The foundation of the new capital was one more element—a very important element—in Constantine's great imperial plan. He visualized the vast Roman Empire united under a single ruler, united, as it never had been by paganism, by the religion of Christ, which should be the determining force in its laws and its customs; even as for him it had been the force that had assured him of victory over his enemies. The dignity of his own office in this scheme demanded a new setting. He had told the bishops assembled at Nicaea that he was the divinely appointed Bishop of those outside the Church. The functions of this office it would scarcely be possible for him to perform in old Rome, where the Bishop was the successor of the Prince of the Apostles. There were obvious reasons for the change. Rome as an imperial city had lost its prestige. It still had an antiquarian interest, but it was shorn of its ancient glory. Its palaces were falling into disrepair. Its population had been decreasing for a long time and famine and plague had still further reduced it. It was remote from the frontiers. Although Senate and Praetorians were no more, yet there still survived traces of the ancient republican spirit which would ill accord with the presence of the Oriental monarch that had now replaced the *princeps* of the past. Rome no longer enjoyed special privileges. Moreover its people were still, for the most part, pagans, and there had been little evidence of enthusiasm on the occasion of his last visit there for the Emperor who had delivered them from the usurper Maxentius, now that he had openly shown his favor towards the adherents of the new religion. Geographically Rome was at almost the extreme west of the Empire, which extended to the confines of Arabia and Persia. The chief dangers to the Empire came from the Danube and the Euphrates. Rome was remote from both these sources of trouble. A Caesar in Gaul might exercise vigilance over the Rhine, but the Emperor needed to be in a position accessible to the two more serious threats of war and invasion. Maximian had never taken up his abode in the depopulated Rome whose mob had been reduced to mere subsidized idlers, but had preferred Milan. Diocletian, realizing that not only the sources of danger but also the center of imperial life and activity had shifted to the East, removed from Sirmium to Nicomedia.

What were the reasons that induced Constantine to make this far-reaching change at this time? The pagan writers would have us feel that it was because Rome had become unendurable to Constantine on account of the memories of the unhappy year that he spent there when his wife and son were murdered. The Palatine was filled with ghosts for him. It is quite unlikely, however, that this momentous decision that was destined to ensure the survival of the Empire for more than another thousand years, was inspired by the mere desire for personal relief from remorse, or by sudden caprice. Whatever political reasons suggested the importance of removing the capital from Rome to the East had existed for a long time. Even the mad boy, priest of El-gabal, apparently had no thought of removing the capital to his native Syria or to any other part of the East. Aurelian, who must have found Rome utterly distasteful to him, enlarged its area and surrounded it with great walls. Diocletian's residence at Nicomedia and consistent absence from the ancient capital do not appear to have betokened any thought of transferring the seat of the Imperial government away from Rome. The military reasons were far more cogent at an earlier period than they were at the particular moment when Constantine made this momentous decision. There can be no possible question but that it was a thought original with Constantine and closely united with his great purposes for the Empire of the future.

During the final stages of his conflict with Licinius, Constantine was fighting in close proximity to the ancient town of Byzantium. Its obvious advantages must have been clear to him at that time. As a master of strategy, he now saw the unique situation of the city from the inland side. Yet, while these allurements may have determined the actual situation of the new capital, it is doubtful if they were sufficient to account for the decision to make so revolutionary a change. It is inconceivable that he should have been able to foresee the tremendous consequences that would inevitably result from his decision. Some other motive is necessary to explain the actual determination to take a step so tremendous and so unprecedented. That motive was, without question, religious. The final conflict with Licinius had been in reality the struggle between Christianity and paganism. While Licinius had relied on seers and magicians, Eusebius tells us that Constantine, like Moses of old, pitched the tabernacle of the cross outside and at a distance from his camp and spent his time before each engagement in devout prayer. He was always rewarded with a manifestation of the divine Presence, after which he would issue forth and immediately give orders to his army to advance. His triumph was, to him, as obviously the result of divine assistance as had been the victory at the Milvian Bridge. That victory issued in his definite acceptance of the religion of the God Who had bestowed it; this final victory, as clearly due to supernatural aid, would provide sufficient inspiration to impel him to definite unprecedented action once more. Then the various considerations based on practical utility, strategic advantages, his own observations during the progress of the recent campaign, would all play their part. The motive power had been provided and, once sole master of the Roman world, he proceeded without delay to put his plans into execution. The statement that "Constantinople was born of the whim of a despot who was prey to intense religions exaltation" is an obvious exaggeration. Constantine was a warrior, a strategist, a statesman of wide outlook, as well as a man of intensely religious nature. He had been giving this problem serious consideration for a period of time. He had definite plans for the future of the Empire. No doubt he needed some further incentive in the form of a manifestation of divine approval to prompt him to carry out his purpose. He felt that this sign had now been given him. He could but follow the prompting of the divine Will.

Other places besides Rome had seen their glory pass from them to new cities. In Britain London might claim preeminence in wealth and in age, yet York had become the official residence of the Caesar. Treves had now become the seat of the imperial government in Gaul. As Rome became less and less the center of gravity in the Empire, it was inevitable that new centers should spring up in response to changed conditions and constantly developing needs. Yet, however many centers might arise for purposes of administration, one only could be the chief. In the past this chief center had always been Rome. Now it would be "New Rome." By this name that Constantine gave to his new capital he made it evident that he regarded himself as merely moving Rome from the Tiber to the Bosphorus, where, not only would it be more conveniently located in relation to the Empire as a whole, but where it could also perform its function as the center of authority more efficiently in the renovated and reconstituted Empire which he envisioned for the future.

The idea of transferring the capital to another situation is reported to have been in Constantine's mind for some time. He had thought of Naissus, his reputed birthplace, of Serdica. Even ancient Troy is said to have been considered. Constantine is reported to have fallen under the spell of the ancient Roman and Sabine legends and to have conceived of himself as another Romulus. Accepting the tale of the Trojan origin of the Romans, it is said that he thought for a time of removing the capital to the place of its origin, even proceeding so far as to build new gates for the city. He may also have considered Nicomedia, but that had been Diocletian's city, and this was to be the city of the Christian Empire, and the seat of the origin of the last persecution would not be fitting. After the victory over Licinius he made his final choice, and he made no mistake. When, after the Peace of Tilsit, Napoleon refused to allow the Czar to take Constantinople, it is reported that he exclaimed, "Constantinople! Never! it is the empire of the world!" Perhaps Constantine had not so clear a vision of the dominant situation of Byzantium, but he must have been conscious of some of its advantages and of its conspicuous suitability for his purpose—to be the center of a unified, Christian Roman Empire.

There had for centuries been a city at this particular point. Byzantium had been founded by Byzas, the legendary King of Megaris, in the seventh century before Christ. Its first settlers spoke the Doric dialect. It is to its original founders that the credit belongs for a choice so wise. They were the ones who first realized its beauty, its natural facilities for defence, as well as its command of the route by water from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The story is related by Herodotus that the Delphic Oracle told these original settlers to establish their city "opposite the land of the blind," for an earlier group of Megareans had chosen Chalcedon on the opposite shore, blind indeed to the advantages of the unsurpassed triangle flanked by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the garden of flowers. It was indeed the natural bridgehead between East and West.

When the long struggles between Persia and Hellas began, Byzantium was the first city of Hellas to fall into Persian hands. Burnt to the ground after the Ionian revolt, it was rebuilt and enlarged under Pausanias, when the Persians were finally expelled from Greece. After veering now to one side and now to the other during the long conflict between Athens and Sparta, it was only the eloquent plea of Xenophon that saved Byzantium from destruction on the return of the Ten Thousand from the East. With the aid of Mausolus, it freed itself from the Athenian yoke to become the foremost maritime Greek city. After being besieged for two years by Philip and the Macedonians, the barking of dogs roused the inhabitants to expel the invaders who had already scaled the walls of the city. The helpless prey of the Gauls and Thracians and of the allied maritime Greek states, in the third century before Christ, the Byzantines became allies of the Romans and entered upon a period of peace and prosperity. The later Roman emperors, however, deprived the city of its privileges, and, by espousing the cause of Niger against Septimius Severus, Byzantium brought upon itself a siege of three years in which, with incredible courage and steadfastness, it sustained unaided the forces of the Roman Empire. The vengeance of Septimius Severus, when finally he was victorious over the brave city, abolished both the city and its name. Six years later, however, this same Emperor attempted to rebuild what he had destroyed. Within half a century most of its inhabitants were massacred by the soldiers of Gallienus. In the struggle between Constantine and Licinius Byzantium had remained loyal to Licinius and had afforded him a refuge after his defeat at Adrianople. When Licinius fled to Chalcedon, after the defeat of his fleet in the Dardanelles, the Byzantines still withstood siege at the hands of Constantine's troops, and it was the final conquest of this city that sealed the triumph of Constantine.

Such was the past history of Constantine's new capital. It had resisted him to the very end. But it was a small city, which covered probably only the area now occupied by the Seraglio. From Seraglio Point can be seen six other hills, so that the

New Rome might readily bear an outward resemblance to the City of the Seven Hills on the Tiber. It is doubtful if Constantine's city included all seven hills. Where history is silent, legend is once more active. It is related that Constantine himself traced the boundary of his city, walking spear in hand, and marking the line for the walls. When asked by his courtiers how far he could go, the legend relates that he replied, as though he saw a heavenly vision, "Until He tarries Who now goes before." It is also related by another legend that he observed the flight of an eagle from Chrysopolis to Byzantium, and that it was this that first inspired him with his conception of the ancient city on the Bosphorus as the new seat of Empire.

Another legend, preserved by various English chroniclers, describes Constantine, when sleeping for the first night under the walls of the city that was to be his new capital, as having a vision, in which an old woman appeared to him. After he had prayed, the old woman was transformed into a fair maiden. Then she was robed in an imperial mantle and was crowned. Constantine's mother, Helena, then appeared to him and bade him ever to care for the woman in the vision. Troubled in mind, Constantine was unable to understand the significance of the vision until Sylvester arrived to explain it to him. The old woman was the ancient Byzantium; the fair young maiden was the city which he should create. Constantine was bidden to assume the clothing he had worn at the time of his baptism and to ride the same horse that had borne him to the tombs of the Apostles. As he rode he was to carry the *labarum* in his right hand and to trail it along the ground so that the furrows it made might mark out the lines for the walls of the city. There are traces of this legend in Sozomen and in Philostorgius. The former relates only the vision, while the latter omits the vision, and tells of the Heavenly Power (Dunamis) that led him and describes Constantine as walking about, spear in hand to mark the boundaries of his new city. This title "Heavenly Power" (Dunamis Ourania) is one of the very early titles for Christ. In John Lydus there is the addition of the oxen ploughing the boundaries of the city. This is apparently a companion legend to that of Constantine's baptism by Pope Sylvester, in which material partly pagan and partly Christian has been blended.

Constantine is said to have laid the first stone for his new city on November 4, 326. The settlement is said to have been completed on May 11, 330, when the occasion was celebrated with forty days of holiday-making. Prejudiced writers relate that many of the buildings were erected so hastily that within a short time they had to be torn down and replaced. Senators are reported to have found their former dwellings duplicated in the New Rome on their arrival there. There would seem to be no question but that all sorts of inducements and commands were used to compel men of prominence to settle in the new capital and that many another city was deprived of its ablest citizens that the New Rome might have the foremost men from all over the Empire residing in it. In like manner a heavy toll was taken of the art treasures from all of Greece to adorn the new city.

There has been a vast amount of discussion with regard to Constantine's policy in his new city as it affected paganism and pagan temples. Certain facts would appear to be evident. Pagan rites had their place in the consecration of the city, perhaps a more prominent place than the Christian rites. Both Eusebius and Zosimus are silent on this subject. John Lydus states that Praetextatus, who acted as Pontifex Maximus, took part in these ceremonies together with Sopater. These men, hierophant and magician perhaps, were, at all events representatives of the old religion. Their presence and participation in the initiatory rites of the city would, no doubt, be a concession on the part of the Christian Emperor to the prejudices and preferences of his pagan subjects. It is also reported that a famous astrologer cast the horoscope of the new city. It is inconceivable that, had the ceremonies been distinctively and exclusively Christian, Eusebius would have failed to describe them. Another fact that is quite certain is that the city had great numbers of statues of pagan gods and goddesses set up as decorations. These statues had been brought from all parts of the Empire. Codinus relates that even the Church of the Holy Wisdom was decorated with pagan statues. Such a practice proves very little, if the statues were solely for adornment; but it is unlikely that Constantine would have permitted them in the original Sancta Sophia. It seems quite certain also that the statute of Constantine that was set up in his city was originally a statue of Apollo, on which the head of the Emperor had been substituted for that of the god. This would be singularly appropriate, for it was unquestionably through the monotheistic devotion to the Sun-god, whom he identified with Apollo, that Constantine found his way to the religion of Christ; and such a statue would relate an important tale to his subjects.

What are we to say of the ceremonies that took place at the column that bore the statue of the Sun-god converted into that of the Emperor? Philostorgius relates that the Christians offered sacrifices to an image of Constantine on a column of porphyry and honored it with lighted lamps and incense, making vows and supplications to it. We are also told that horsemen dismounted and passed it on foot. Theodoret would turn the attention of his readers to what happens at this column as an evidence of how God honors His servants. The charge of idolatrous worship is absurd, for the ceremonies that took place at the column were probably no more than those that were customary in the Emperor's physical presence. The real problem is that with regard to the temples of the New Rome. Eusebius states definitely that Constantine purged the city of idolatry in every form; that it was not permitted to worship any statues in the temples; no blood spilt on the altars; no sacrifices consumed by fire; no demon festivals or other superstitious ceremonies. Sozomen relates that the city was not polluted by altars, Greek temples, or sacrifices; but that the Emperor adorned it with numerous magnificent houses of prayer and that the zeal of the Christian inhabitants led to the conversion of many of the Jewish inhabitants and most of the Greeks. On the other hand Zosimus states that Constantine erected temples in his New Rome: one to Rhea, although he is said to have mutilated her statue by removing the lions on either side of her and altering the position of her hands; the other to contain the statue of Tyche or Fortune.

The later Byzantine writers are very confusing in their testimony. John Malalas relates that, after despoiling three pagan temples, Constantine ordered that they be allowed to remain. These were the temples of the Sun, of Diana the Moon, and of Aphrodite. He also tells us that Constantine built a golden statue, that of Tyche or Fortune of the City, which he called Anthousa. Codinus says that he built baths and sacred buildings, one to St. Irene, the other to the Holy Apostles; then he abolished all the superstition of the Greeks. Zonaras states that he built temples, which he lavishly adorned. This statement is, however, not conclusive, for Cedrenus uses the word "naos," or "temple," of the Church of the Holy Wisdom, while he uses the word "ecclesia," or "church," of the other sacred buildings which he erected.

What are we to conclude from this mass of confusing testimony? It is quite certain that Constantine and his architects made all possible use of pagan statues for purposes of decoration, particularly in the Hippodrome and Forum. The Pythian Apollo from Delphi, the twisted serpents, the Smynthian

Apollo, each had its place, and was used to beautify the new city. Probably the most revered temples in the old city were allowed to stand (some may even have been repaired and beautified), but rather as public monuments than as centers of pagan worship. Probably the private practice of paganism met with no opposition but, in the new parts of the city no temples were permitted to be built. There was a law of 326 by which it was forbidden to restore temples that were in a state of decay. Organized paganism was at an end. The few old temples that were allowed to stand had no regular temple services. The statues of Castor and Pollux also continued to occupy their accustomed places and, no doubt, were revered by numbers of people. The city presented from the outset a picture of dying paganism surrounded on all sides by triumphant Christianity. Ere long these few concessions to pagan prejudice and tradition would disappear when the influence of the Christian Emperor had made his new capital exclusively Christian. The temple to the Roman Tyche or Fortune would link the fortunes of the New Rome with those of the Old. It may be an instance of the superstitious side of Constantine's nature which continued active for years after his conversion to Christianity. The so-called Oration or Sermon to the Saints, reputed to be composed by Constantine, emphasized particularly the folly of attributing the control of things to Fate, whereas all events, and particularly those which go beyond our powers of understanding, should be attributed solely to the Wisdom of God.

If Constantine did actually compose and deliver this remarkable address, it was utterly inconsistent with the erection of the temple and statue of Tyche at Constantinople. The fact that this temple and statue were erected is definite evidence that Constantine was not responsible for the Oration. It would seem quite clear that the temple of Tyche had no priests or sacrifices associated with it. The coins which commemorated the founding of New Rome bore on the reverse side the figure of Tyche seated on a throne, crowned and bearing a horn of plenty in her hand, with a part of a ship at her feet. Constantine no doubt encouraged a combination of Christian and pagan ideas in association with the thought of Tyche, so that she might be a symbol that would be revered by both classes of the citizens and an uniting force among them. There is ample evidence that pagan figures commonly called "Orans" were utilized as representations of the Blessed Virgin in the catacombs. Constantine doubtless hoped that in the same way Rhea, revered by the pagans, might be transformed into a figure of the Blessed Virgin by the Christian subjects of the new capital. While engaged in building churches for the latter, he hoped to secure the loyalty of the former by the tolerant permission of pagan worship in private, the retention of a few of the older and more sacred temples as symbols rather than as active centers of worship, and by encouraging an ambiguous interpretation of Rhea and Tyche so that they might constitute a common ground between the two elements. St. Augustine states that the city had no pagan temples, and this may have been true somewhat later when he was writing. At the beginning of the city that was to embody the idea of the Christian Emperor presiding over a Christian Empire, a certain amount of conciliation and accommodation might be needed. The day of the ultimate victory of Christianity in the Emperor's city was near at hand. It became almost at once a city of churches. The Emperor would throw the full weight of his authority towards the advancement of the religion which he had adopted as his own. Pagans might continue to dwell in the city. Constantine was far too wise and skilled in statecraft to throw them out. They would, however, be as the Christians had so recently been, a despised minority that might expect no imperial favor. Ere long they would disappear.

The supreme day of Constantine's career was the day of the dedication of his new capital. The great inaugural ceremonies took place within the Hippodrome, the crowning structure of the city, which was destined in the future to be the scene of so many excited gatherings—riots as well as races; both jubilations and tragedies. It was glorious within, adorned with the bronze and marble works of art that had been brought from all parts of the Empire. As the Emperor mounted his throne, surrounded by the surviving members of his family, the loss of the murdered wife and son must have been tragically obvious. Among those missing too was his mother, who had but recently died. On the seats of honor on either side were the members of the newly created Senate, the consuls, the important officials and generals. Below them were the patricians and magistrates. Citizens of every rank were there, including the rabble, that would have such a powerful place in the tumultuous life of the city in the future. The bishop had his part in the ceremonies, pronouncing the name of the reconstituted city, "New Rome," indicating that heathen Byzantium was no more. At the conclusion of the ceremonies the statue of Constantine was brought by soldiers in long cloaks bearing lighted candles. The entire assembly paid homage to the statue, and then it was reverently borne to grace the porphyry column in the Forum, amid the chanting of the clergy. During the centuries that followed, this ceremony was repeated as often as the anniversary day was celebrated.

Christianity must, of its own power, have ultimately triumphed. Sooner or later the Roman Empire would have been forced to move its center to the East, perhaps to this very triangle on the Bosphorus, which has such preeminent advantages. But the two things in the mind and achievement of Constantine were simultaneous, and therein lies his great title to fame. Yet he was also to bequeath to the Empire a new well-established dynastic principle that was to be a fruitful source of sorrow in the future, while the Church, under his patronage, must suffer from Caesaro-Papism, from that interference with its life from the palace; and from the weakness that is the inevitable result of a religion imposed with authority from the secular power.

From the very beginning of the new city vast numbers of dissolute and idle persons were attracted thither by the promise of munificent largesse. The Emperor had developed a highly organized bureaucracy under his immediate control. Luxury and ostentation were the characteristic notes of his Oriental court. The life of this city was to become unique in the history of the world; a theocracy in which the religion of Christ was supreme, a city in which the paramount interest of all the people was religion, a court in which elaborate titles proclaimed the sacredness of everything associated with the Emperor and his administration, a place where the clergy were accorded honors unsought elsewhere, a center, not only of culture and learning, but also of vice and crime, of intrigue and conspiracy, of riot and disorder.

The Forum and the Augusteum were the glory of Constantine's city. The Augusteum, which was named in honor of his mother, Augusta Helena, appears to have been a vast rectangle paved in marble, and surrounded by a row of the noblest statues then in existence. On the one side stood the Bath of Xeuxippos and the stately palaces of the Bishop and the Senate, beyond which rose the walls of the great Imperial Palace. On the other side was the lofty wall of the Hippodrome with its colonnades and arches, while, somewhat later the other side would be bounded by the wall of the great Church of the Wisdom. Somewhere within its enclosure, there was, as at the Roman Forum, the mile-stone, from which distances were reckoned all over the Empire. At first a simple column of marble, it was later a structure in the form of a temple, resting on four arches and surrounded by statues. Within it was the statue of the Emperor and his mother on either side of a great cross, which in later times provided a model for an icon to be found in every church of the East.

The Forum of Constantine was elliptical in form, paved throughout and surrounded by a colonnade. There was a spacious portico at each end, along which were pagan statues of the ancient gods, while at the end was a triumphal arch. Near the center was the lofty column on the top of which stood the statue of Constantine, while near at hand was a monumental fountain on which were portrayed two scenes that decorated all the fountains that were erected by Constantine—Daniel in the den of lions, and the Good Shepherd.

Among the most stupendous of the foundations of Constantine in his new city are the mighty cisterns that still survive. Multitudes of marble columns in rows, surmounted by elaborate capitals, with the pillared arches emerging in dim light, these magnificent constructions suggest today mighty churches emptied of the worshippers, the calm clear water contributing to the sense of serene quiet far removed from the noises and distractions of the world.

The church which Constantine intended to be the Patriarchal church of his city is that dedicated, not to Saint Irene, but to Irene, the Peace of God. Like the Church of the Wisdom, that is the Wisdom or Logos of God, God the Son, not St. Sophia, which Constantine also built, it was replaced later, after the Nika Riot, by Justinian. It was at the altar of the Church of the Peace that the bishop Alexander prayed without ceasing that God would choose between him and Arius. It was here, too, that nearly half a century later, the Arian controversy was ended in 381. Another church that Constantine built should be mentioned, for it was destined to be the Emperor's mausoleum, as it was for the Emperors and Empresses that succeeded him for several centuries. Only members of the reigning house or Patriarchs of Constantinople might be buried there.

The Church of the Peace is the only church that still stands upon the grounds of the Seraglio. It was never converted into a mosque, and therefore, its outward appearance remains the same as before the Ottoman conquest. It was burned at the Nika Riot, and rebuilt by Justinian; later it suffered from earthquake, but was not demolished. In its long history of partial restorations it still preserves its original form, in many details resembling a Roman basilica. Its spacious dome rests upon a cylinder, lighted by a score of windows. Yet the interior is dark and gloomy, for so many windows have been closed, probably by Leo the Isaurian. Numerous pictures in both fresco and mosaic still remain intact, and over the place once occupied by the altar there still remains an immense cross.

The Church of the Peace, in ecclesiastical rank, was second only to the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Here the Patriarch conducted the daily services, except when the calendar of the Church required his presence elsewhere. It was known as the Patriarchal church, and was always served by the clergy from the Church of the Holy Wisdom, which was very close to it.

The Church of the Holy Wisdom corresponds in the East to St. Peter's in Rome. Neither was intended to be the metropolitan Church. But the Church of the Wisdom supplanted the Church of Peace, just as St. Peter's supplanted St. John Lateran. Both were erected by the first Christian Emperor, and in each case the basilica that he built has been supplanted by a later and more magnificent building. The foundations of the Church of the Wisdom were laid in 326 on the site of a pagan temple, in the presence of Constantine, a few months after his return from the Council of Nicaea. It was in the form of a basilica and required ten months for its construction. Both its name and its erection are reminders of the conflict at Nicaea. Thirty-four years later Constantine's son, Constantius II, in a desire to surpass the achievements of his father, tore it down, and rebuilt it on a more imposing scale with a dome of brick, which a year later, when Julian the Apostate became Emperor, gave way and crushed part of the pavement in its fall. This church of Constantius, in which St. John Chrysostom preached, was burned to the ground, and replaced by one built by Theodosius II. After the Nika Riot the church built by Justinian to give to the world such an example of magnificence as it had never beheld before, occupied the same spot, and, after nearly five centuries of desecration as a Mohammedan mosque, it still stands today, the glorious expression of Justinian's supreme ambition to outstrip all other churches in the world in magnificence and beauty; but also the reminder of the Emperor who established on this spot the first monument to commemorate the triumph of Nicaea.

One other church built by Constantine in his new capital demands our attention. Originally dedicated by him to the Holy Trinity, its name was soon changed to that of the Holy Apostles, when relics of St. Timothy, St. Andrew and St. Luke were deposited under its altar. It was from the pulpit of this church that St. Chrysostom denounced the Empress Eudoxia; but its chief title to fame is the fact that for centuries it was the final resting place of the Emperors and Patriarchs of Constantinople. Only the rarest and most costly materials were used for its construction, and its ornaments in gold and silver with diamonds and other gems were amost countless. Not the slightest trace of it survives today.

It remains yet to speak of the Hippodrome, which today is called by the Turkish name Atmeïdan. Three monuments still occupy places along the central line of its shrunken enclosure, like tombstones in an abandoned cemetery of the past. An Egyptian obelisk, a twisted serpent and a crumbling stone pillar are all that remain today of the vast and glorious Hippodrome that was renowned throughout the world. Its stupendous proportions were a picture of the all-important place that it occupied in the political and social life of Constantine's city. The three monuments that still survive preserve the line of the *spina,* around which the charioteers used to drive their steeds. The obelisk stood in the exact center of the building, which was curved at one end, its straight sides extending in length nearly four times as far as its width of four hundred feet. To attempt to reconstruct it with its walls and gates and tiers of marble seats, its precious statues and works of art would require a most vivid imagination. To attempt to people the seats with the throng that once occupied them or to revive anything of the intense excitement that attended many of the scenes that were enacted there; to picture the Blues and the Greens in their vociferous rivalry, is a task for which the present remains provide little inspiration.

It had been begun by the Emperor Severus, but, interrupted by the summons to quell a rebellion in Britain, his stupendous undertaking lay unfinished and neglected for more than a hundred years until Constantine with restless energy undertook its completion. The work was accomplished in time for the chief rites of the dedication of the city. While the various public squares were adorned with the accumulated art treasures of the Empire, they were most lavishly bestowed upon the Hippodrome, which provided the most imposing opportunity for their display. Never had the world before, never has it since, beheld so rich and varied an art collection.

At the northern end stretching the entire width was a lofty structure within which were the stables and storehouses. Above was a broad tribune in the center of which, supported by marble pillars, was the Imperial Box with the Emperor's throne, which, when the Emperor was present, was thronged with dignitaries and with the Imperial Guard; while in front, at a lower level, was the pillared platform, on which stood the Emperor's standard-bearers. Behind this was the Church of St. Stephen, three hundred feet wide and so spacious that it contained suites of royal apartments, and was even called a palace. Through it, by means of a spiral staircase, the Emperor had access to the Kathisma, the Emperor's Box. This was the way of approach to the Hippodrome for the Emperor alone.

The first tier of seats, the place of distinction, was thirteen feet above the arena. Behind it rose tier upon tier, broken half way to the top by a broad passage. At the top was a wide promenade which ran all the way around the building. This was forty feet above the ground. Eighty thousand people could be comfortably seated on the bright marble seats. Mr. Grosvenor has summed up the Hippodrome and the life that it embodied in these words:

"No theatre, no palace, no public building has today a promenade so magnificent. Standing forty feet above the ground, protected by a solid marble railing reaching to the breast, the spectator had a specious avenue two thousand seven hundred and sixty-five feet long in which to walk. Within was all the pomp and pageantry of all possible imperial and popular contest and display. Without, piled high around, were the countless imposing structures 'of that city which for more than half a thousand years was the most elegant, the most civilized and polished city in the world.' Beyond were the Golden Horn, crowded with shipping; the Bosphorus in its winding beauty; the Marmora, studded with islands and fringing the Adriatic coast; the long line of the Arganthonius Mountains and the peaks of the Bithynian Olympus, glittering with eternal snow

—all combining in a panorama which even now no other city of mankind can rival.

"In the Hippodrome eighty thousand spectators might find ample room. In the delirium of the race, ease, rank, wealth, office, all was forgotten; no barriers of marble railings, far less of caste, could keep the crowds apart. Treading on one another's feet, raised on one another's shoulders, from podium to promenade close wedged against one another's side, one hundred thousand people in one human mass, fused into a common passion, might glue their eyes upon the chariot and the goal. The admiring presence of the fairer sex was seldom granted to the charioteer. . . .

"Combats of wild beasts or gladiators were most rare. Still, the arena was bounded in imitation of a Roman trench by a narrow walk called the Euripos, which was paved in tessellated stone. When the city was dedicated, this Euripos was piled high with fish and cakes which were thrown among the people in sign of plenty. The southern part of the arena was the place of punishment, and sometimes of execution. Nor was it the traitor and the murderer alone who there met his doom. Byzantios laments that 'there took place the bloody deaths of not only magicians, heretics, and apostates, but even of patriarchs and emperors.' "

The visitor to Constantine's city today will find little left of the founder's achievement or of the glory that characterized the centuries that followed him. The Turk, unwilling to call the city by Constantine's name, gave it the appellation of "Istanboul," unwittingly preserving the Greek language which he wished to obliterate; for the name which he has given the city is but the way that his ancestors attempted to imitate the words of its former inhabitants when they said, "Eis ten polin," —"Into the city." Since 1928 Republican Turkey has striven unceasingly to obliterate the destruction, decay, and dirt that overwhelmed Constantine's city in the middle of the fifteenth century. An effort has also been made to uncover some of the treasures long since hidden. A new interest in the glories of the past has supplanted the antagonism and apathy of nearly five centuries.

The three sentinels of the Hippodrome have remained throughout the ages. The obelisk of Thotmes III, which had already stood for more centuries in Egypt than had elapsed since Constantine brought it to grace his new city on the Bosphorus, has witnessed the vicissitudes of sixteen centuries in its present position, and seems destined to stand in the same place for many years to come. The shattered column, which was not a decoration of Constantine's time, but was set up much later by Constantine VIII, Porphyrogenitus, was once covered with plates of burnished brass; but now, in its crumbling state, it still helps to mark the line of the spina of Constantine's Hippodrome. The famous column of twisted serpents from Delphi, which stood for seven centuries in the most sacred shrine of Hellas, and may have been the medium through which the vapors inhaled by the prophetess inspired her oracles and guided the destinies of the cities of ancient Greece, is still a link not only with Constantine, but with a far more remote past, which he appropriated for the embellishment of his city. It was made of Corinthian brass, and expressed the gratitude to Apollo of the victorious Greeks who, at the battle of Plataea, had thrust back the Persian Xerxes and his hosts from the shores of Europe, to which they were never to return. It bears upon its coils the names of the thirty-one Greek cities which had been successful in the fight for freedom, and it is still possible to read, in letters slightly larger than the rest, the name of the Tenians, who, as Herodotus relates, were able to prove to their sister states that they deserved to be included in so honorable a memorial. It is hard to imagine its appearance as it stood at Delphi, surmounted by a golden tripod on which the priestess sat as we gaze upon it in its mutilated state today. Yet, even so, it is a direct link with the days of Themistocles and Xerxes, as well as with those of the Emperor who brought it hither and mounted it upon the column which is still fixed to its pedestal.

Close at hand it is possible to enter one of the great cisterns where the lines of beautiful columns are a vivid witness to the sumptuous and wise provisions that Constantine made for the health and comfort of his city. Not far away, in the center of what was Constantine's Forum, on the very spot where traditionally he pitched his tent during the siege of Byzantium, stands what still remains of the Column of Constantine the Great. It is now commonly called the Burnt Column, for it was blackened and partially consumed by fire at the time of the Nika Riot. It is a gloomy reminder of its past greatness. Erected by the Emperor to mark the founding of the city, it contained an extraordinary collection of relics, including the crosses of the two thieves, the adze with which Noah fashioned the ark, together with the Palladium of Rome, which was believed by some to be the original Palladium of Troy. On the column Constantine had these words engraved: "O Christ, Ruler and Master of the World, to Thee have I now consecrated this obedient city, and this scepter and the power of Rome. Guard it: deliver it from every harm." On the great day of the dedication of the city the bronze statue of Apollo brought from Athens and regarded as the work of Phidias, was placed on the top of the column. But for the head of Apollo had been substituted the head of Constantine with this inscription, "To Constantine shining like the Sun." In the right hand was a lance, in the left a globe, surmounted by a cross.

The column was held in deepest reverence by the populace of Constantinople. It was under its shadow that Arius died in

Old cisterns at Constantinople.

336. Annually the Emperor, Patriarch and clergy chanted hymns of thanksgiving around it. Many tales of marvellous happenings came to be associated with it through the centuries. Today, charred and mutilated, it stands the single monument that brings us into immediate contact with Constantine himself and with the founding of his city.

The great Church of the Wisdom, the mosaic treasures of which have been gradually brought to view once more in recent years, is, of course, the church of Justinian, and only marks the site of Constantine's original church at this spot. The Church of the Peace, which more than any other in the modern city preserves its original features unchanged and unmutilated, has for many years violated its name by serving as a military museum, where one can study the arms and equipment of Turkish soldiers during the past five centuries.

Below these churches on the slope that extends to the Sea of Marmora, since 1935, extensive excavations have been made in the area of the Sacred Palaces of the Emperors. Columns, coins, armor, pottery have come to light, but most rewarding of all has been the discovery of a vast area covered with an infinite variety of floor mosaics, some in elaborate decorative patterns, others depicting men and animals of every variety, and typical scenes in many colors. Here too has been brought to light a tiny basilica, evidently a private oratory in one of the ancient palaces. These recent excavations have already established fresh contacts with the remote past. They give promise of revealing still other survivals which may date even from the days of Constantine's founding of the New Rome.

In Constantine's new capital Christ was to reign supreme. The smoke of pagan sacrifice was never to rise, save in the short period of Julian's reign. The chariot races of the Hippodrome were to supplant the cruel sports of the amphitheatre. Paganism might be despoiled to beautify the city, but as a religious force it was to meet a speedy death. Yet Constantine transported to the new city large numbers of men who brought with them the traditions and customs, the beliefs and prejudices of the past. No dependence can be placed on the late story that tells of how the Emperor, during the absence of some of his officers on public business, had exact copies of their houses in ancient Rome erected in the New Rome, and caused their wives and children, as well as their household goods, to be transported hither to welcome them on their return. But, at all events, he did offer great inducements to men prominent in Rome to come to the new capital. He even went so far as to issue an edict debarring from the imperial service all men in Asia Minor who did not build houses for themselves in Constantinople. He ordered the corn ships from Egypt to sail now to Constantinople instead of to Rome, and instituted in his new capital a wasteful system of free distribution of oil and wine, wheat and money, destined to produce in the New Rome an idle mob which would here reproduce the same vices that had for so long been a serious menace to the city on the Tiber.

Already that type of life and of civilization which later ages have characterized as Byzantine was beginning to develop—a composite not merely of Western and Hellenistic elements but with the admixture of a third element which we can only call Oriental. In a real sense religion would dominate the life of the city, but it would express itself in disputations among all classes of society regarding abstruse theological questions—disputations as violent and passionate as the frequent excited contests between the Blues and the Greens in the Hippodrome. A court hallowed by sacred titles would be polluted by intrigue and constantly recurring mutilations and murders. Monks and eunuchs would vie with one another in the attempt to gain the dominant influence over the absolute ruler who controlled the Church as well as the State. The great center of culture that was destined to preserve art and letters during the centuries when the West was being overrun by the inroads of barbarians would time and again be at the mercy of a mob if anything more fickle and violent than that of the ancient capital; while religion and crime often seemed to go hand in hand. Christ would be called the Sovereign Lord of the City, but was it possible that He should share His rule with Caesar? "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" "What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?" Tertullian had asked. The incompatibility between philosophy and the Church seemed obvious to Tertullian because of his peculiar temperament and outlook. In time true philosophy would be found to be the handmaid of religion. The rule of Caesar, however, and in particular when Caesar had become an absolute monarch, could not fail to be definitely incompatible with the rule of Christ. The history of Constantinople from the days of its foundation until the time of its seizure by the Turks, was a vivid example of the disastrous effects of Caesaro-Papism, the domination of the clergy of the Church by their secular ruler.

Chapter XV

CONSTANTINE'S LAST YEARS

THE ELEVEN YEARS that remained to Constantine after the celebration of his Vicennalia were a period of less strenuous activity, particularly so in the absence of important military campaigns. It was fitting that from his fiftieth year onward he should divert his interests and his energies into other channels. The foundation of his new capital and its dedication were the most important events of these years. The construction of buildings and the adornment of the new city of necessity claimed much of his attention. It was to be the new center of administration for the Empire and it was the Emperor's aim that conditions there should, as far as possible, reproduce those at Rome. In 330 he established his *consistorium* there. The Senate was composed largely of *decurions* from the many towns of Greece and Asia Minor, thus paving the way for the transformation of the capital in a relatively short time from a Latin to a Greek city. A *pro-consul* at first was appointed to fill the place of the Prefect at Rome. Here (in theory) was the Emperor's official residence during the last years of his reign, yet we find him at other places numerous times. The death of Crispus and Fausta cast a melancholy gloom over the latter part of Constantine's life and his unpopularity at Rome at the time of his Vicennalia had also left its mark. Surrounded by sycophants, ambitious courtiers and officials, as well as by unscrupulous prelates and clergy such as Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Emperor was often influenced by adulation and flattery and at times fell under the sway of unprincipled advisers.

The frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube gave little trouble at this time. In the late summer of 328 Constantine had been obliged to remain at Treves for some time to supervise the conduct of a campaign against the Alemanni. His son, Constantine II, who was nominally in command of the expedition, was far too young to render active service. A decisive victory at this time ushered in a period of three years during which the frontiers of both the Rhine and the Danube were at peace. More and more the complications and divisions caused by the Arian controversy claimed Constantine's attention at this time. But it could not be expected that the perennially troublesome frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube would allow the Emperor a long period of tranquility to devote to theological, administrative, and financial problems. In 332 the Sarmatians, fearing an invasion of the Goths, appealed to him for assistance. Constantine II was again sent from Gaul in nominal command of the expedition and, at the same time the Emperor sent his second son, Constantius II, who had been given the rank of Caesar eight years earlier when a mere child, to take the place of his brother in Gaul. The Roman army crossed the Danube and won a decisive victory. The Goths surrendered and among the hostages taken at this time was the son of their king Araric. They are reported to have lost almost a hundred thousand men through hunger and cold. According to the terms of the treaty the Goths undertook the defence of the frontier and accelerated the process of barbarization of the Roman army by providing auxiliary troops in return for subsidies of money and corn.

Within a short time the most important tribe of the Sarmatians, the Argaragantes, began to show signs of disloyalty but, before it became necessary to take active steps against them, their own slaves, the Limigantes, taking advantage of the fact that they had been armed to assist in repulsing the Goths, proceeded to rebel against their masters. The Limigantes were successful in their rebellion and Constantine received as many as three hundred thousand of the defeated Argaragantes, together with their wives and children, and settled them through Thrace, Scythia, Macedonia, and Italy. Thus a policy was adopted which maintained the security of the frontier for two decades, but only at the expense of hastening the barbarization of the Empire.

The following year, 335, there was an attempt at usurpation of imperial power, but on a scale that seems quite insignificant. It was a certain Calocaerus, a camel-driver, who attempted a revolution on the island of Cyprus, causing himself to be proclaimed Augustus. Constantine's nephew Delmatius (the son of his half-brother of the same name), who had been appointed *magister militum,* had the distinction of stamping out this rebellion and, in recognition of his services, was elevated to the rank of Caesar and thus associated with Constantine's three surviving sons, the youngest of whom, Constans, had at the age of ten been raised to the same rank as his brothers. Calocaerus was tortured and put to death and there is no evidence of any further attempt at usurpation during the remainder of Constantine's reign. It was, however, apparently due to this rebellion that Constantine became fearful of threats menacing his dynasty and caused the young Licinius Licinianus, a potential leader of discontented groups, to be put to death. We have already mentioned the execution of the young Licinius in connection with the murder of Constantine's wife and oldest son, although it did not happen until some years later. As we have already indicated, he was not the son of Constantine's sister Constantia, but of a slave woman. He had already been in exile for some years. The method of his execution seems to have been unnecessarily cruel; for apparently he was reduced to the status of his mother, then placed under arrest as a fugitive slave, and finally put to death at Carthage.

On the eastern frontier there was always the Persian menace. Ever since the victory of Galerius in 297 there had been peace between the Roman Empire and the Persian King, due in part to the humiliating defeat and the ignominious terms that had been imposed, in part to internal conflict within the Persian kingdom. When Sapor II succeeded to the Sassanian throne in 310 to begin his reign of seventy years, it was inevitable that, as soon as he felt his position sufficiently secure, he should begin to think about avenging the mortification that had been inflicted on his kingdom. During the period of nearly thirty-seven years that intervened between the victory of Galerius and the revival of active aggression, we have very little information with regard to the relations between the Empire and the Persian kingdom. A tale not above suspicion such as one might encounter in the pages of Herodotus is recounted by Zosimus at the time of his narrative of the final conflict between Constantine and Licinius. An extraordinary letter incorporated in his *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius and reproduced by Theodoret, purporting to be addressed to King Sapor II by Constantine, probably in 333, has been rejected by many historians. It is, however, quite consistent with what we know of Constantine's convictions regarding his mission as "Bishop of those outside the Church," and gives expression to the Emperor's personal religious experience in the words that we know were most characteristic of his own interpretation of that experience.

The story related by Zosimus is this. A certain Persian Prince, Hormisdas by name, had entered the birthday banquet of his father, the King, laden with venison. He had apparently arrived fresh from a successful hunting expedition. The guests at the banquet failed to arise and show him due respect. So enraged was he at their insubordination, that he threatened them all with the death of Marsyas. The story of the Phrygian satyr, who was bound to a tree and flayed alive, was apparently not familiar to the Persian nobles; but one of their number, who had lived in Phrygia, explained to them its significance. Cherishing an undying memory of the threat, they chose his brother as king on the death of his father, in defiance of the law; and put Hormisdas in chains and confined him on the top of a hill. His wife, however, sent him a fish with a file in its belly by the hands of one of her eunuchs and, at the same time, sent him several camel loads of meat and wine with which he was able to provide a feast for those who were responsible for guarding him. While they feasted he continued, by the use of the file, to remove the shackles from his legs and to make good his escape, together with the eunuch. Assuming the dress of the eunuch, he made his way to the King of Armenia, whence he was able to continue his journey until he arrived at the court of Constantine. There he was received with due honor and respect.

This tale may be quite without foundation or significance. Zosimus has been so frequently shown to be undependable that we would probably be wise to dismiss it as idle gossip or as a romance born of a wild imagination, which the credulous Zosimus was but too ready to incorporate in his history. If, however, it contains any element of truth, it is indicative, not so much of the generous hospitality of Constantine, as of a growing hostility between the Emperor and the Persian King. Sapor had, no doubt, long since determined to recover the provinces that had been lost to the Roman Empire, and in 333 Constantine became sufficiently aware of his intentions to feel justified in sending his son Constantius II from Gaul to take over the command of the armies of the East.

It was at about this time that the letter from Constantine to

Sapor, if it be genuine, was written. He had already stated that during the persecution Christians had gone outside the Empire in search of a safe refuge. Constantine would be the one to whom the Armenian Christians would most naturally turn for protection when oppressed by the Persian King. Sapor II at times during his long reign persecuted the Christians fiercely. He seems to have been able to make himself more feared by the Roman Empire than any other Persian King. For a time his relations with Constantine were not unfriendly. Shortly before the time when this letter is reported to have been written, Sapor sent an embassy to Constantine presenting gifts and asking for a friendly alliance. He may have learned that Constantine was already consolidating his forces in the East. Constantine felt that the mission that had been assigned him by God involved the obligation to put forth propaganda which looked to the conversion of pagans outside the Empire, as well as to protect Christian people wherever they might be. As "Bishop of those outside the Church" he extended his functions to include a particular concern for the welfare of the Christians in Persia as well as for the Armenian kingdom, which had now become Christian and was being threatened by Sapor. These two thoughts are evident in this letter. He testifies to his own progress in the knowledge of God and records his own experience as the liberator of those who had been oppressed by tyrants. He expresses his detestation of idolatry, pagan sacrifices, and magic, which have caused the utter condemnation of whole nations in the pagan world. He emphasizes the purity of mind and spirit that the true God demands from His worshippers, and His displeasure towards the arrogant and haughty; as well as the tranquility and peace which He bestows upon a prudent king who governs justly. He reminds the Persian King of the just retribution that overtook the earlier Roman Emperors who denied the true God, and in particular of the humiliating fate of Valerian. Recent years have seen the unhappy end of those Emperors who had issued edicts of persecution, and these examples of divine visitation Constantine has himself beheld. Now he sees in the faithfulness and unity of the Christians the promise that all men will be united in the service of the One God. He has learned with joy of the large number of Christians now in Persia. He prays for the prosperity and happiness of the King, as well as for the protection and well-being of the Christians in his realm, promising the King an inestimable benefit as the result of his kindness to his Christian subjects.

The following year hostilities began. Tiran, the King of Armenia, was seized by treachery through the devices of the Persian satrap Waras. He was carried off to Persia where both his eyes were put out. The Armenian nobles sent ambassadors to seek aid from the Roman Empire. During the absence of these ambassadors Sapor marched into Armenia and seized the country. Constantine, as the champion of the Christians, if for no other reason, felt it incumbent upon him to intervene. He appointed his nephew Hannibalianus, who was married to his daughter Constantia, as King of Armenia. Thus a title foreign to all the traditions of the Roman Empire since the days of the Tarquins was restored. It was, however, merely the continuation of the title long customary in the eastern kingdom, and indicated no alteration in the Empire itself. In 336 Hannibalianus surprised the Persians and put them to flight, taking possession of the land which had been seized by the Persian satraps. The Empire was now divided into five different spheres of military administration; for Delmatius had been assigned a large part of the Balkan peninsula, but Constantine retained the sole and supreme command. Constantine was preparing to make still more decisive the victory over the

Persians and to go to the front again himself when he was overtaken by his final illness.

In 335 Constantine celebrated his Tricennalia. It was on that occasion that Delmatius was made a Caesar. With Constantine II ruling Gaul, Britain, and Spain; Constantius the provinces of Asia and Egypt; Constans Italy and Africa together with the dioceses of Pannonia and Dacia; and with the provision for his two nephews—Armenia, Pontus and Cappadocia being given to Hannibalianus, and most of the Balkan peninsula to Delmatius—it would appear that conditions were ripe for dynastic quarrels in the near future, and that the line of Theodora had been treated as all but equals of the line of Helena. There was undoubtedly a party about the court that favored the cause of the nephews as against the sons of Constantine. The fact that Ablabius was put to death in the general massacre of the rival line that ensued after the death of Constantine would seem to indicate that he was influential in this party.

The Oration of Eusebius in praise of the Emperor on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of his reign is significant chiefly as manifesting his judgment on the reign of Constantine and its achievements. Apparently the sermon was first preached at Jerusalem and then its author brought it to Constantinople that it might be an important feature of the celebration there. The bishops who were present on this occasion were invited to dine with the Emperor, but their numbers were considerably diminished because those who had been in attendance at Jerusalem and Tyre were for the most part ashamed to come to Constantinople. We are told that Constantine insisted on remaining in a standing posture throughout the delivery of the sermon.

The first part of the address, which is the panegyric on Constantine, is thought by some to be distinct from the second part, which may have been delivered separately. The panegyric, which is florid and exuberant in style, leaves nothing unsaid that can redound to the glory of Constantine and the exaltation of his virtues. From the theological standpoint the Oration is an enigma; for passages of Nicaean orthodoxy are punctuated by others definitely suggestive of Arianism, and even of Neo-Platonism. The learned bishop celebrates the reign of law in which the imperial rule mirrors the divine. The necessity for monarchy is indicated by the Unity of God. The reign of the divinely appointed Emperor is a picture of the rule of God throughout the universe by the divine Logos. The perils of paganism as well as its errors are emphasized. The Empire would seem to be already Christian, yet we know that such was not the case, and that this consummation would not be attained save by the methods of Constantine and his son Constantius, which would aim at the complete subservience of the Church to the State. Yet the Church is described as already triumphant. The errors of paganism have been made manifest in their evil results. Already men and women are abandoning the allurements of society to devote themselves to the study of heavenly wisdom. What could be more wonderful than the use that was made of obscure and unlettered men as God's instruments to be the legislators and teachers of the human race? The works of Christ in our own age are manifest. Of all the ministers of God the great Emperor is foremost in his own personal experience and as a herald of God's truth to all mankind. To him are ascribed, not only the relief and comfort of men, divinely bestowed gifts of foreknowledge, and the power to unravel theological difficulties; but also the ability to promulgate wise laws, to win outstanding military victories, and to correct abuses and administer wise measures in every department of the State. Constantine is the repository of secret experience of the divine treasured in his memory, convincing evidence of the power of Christ which has moved him to such munificent acts as the erection of the great church at Jerusalem. Thus, by witnessing to the divine power, he has borne witness also to eternal life, and has proclaimed to all nations in imperial characters the victory of the Word of God.

The so-called Oration of Constantine is a baffling document. It appears to have been appended to Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* as a specimen of the Emperor's style in writing, and the statement is made that he was in the habit of composing speeches in Latin, which were later translated into Greek by interpreters, and were then delivered by their author. This particular address would seem to have been delivered on Good Friday, but we have no hint of the year. It was presumably towards the end of Constantine's reign.

The theme with which it opens is one of which we would expect the Emperor to treat. War, strife, and avarice have prevailed because of man's failure to accept divine truth, both before and after the coming of Christ. The author humbly acknowledges his own ineptitude, yet his love for God has given him the boldness to speak, and he asks those better qualified to treat of divine mysteries to correct him. He sets forth his own monotheistic belief, which is based on the unity in nature and is essential as the foundation of order. Then, after indicating the falsity of polytheism, he launches forth upon an exposition of Nicaean theology. Yet this very exposition is not free from serious flaws, for he seems to regard the fall of man rather as an elevation to a state of higher intelligence and knowledge. After treating of the creation of the lower animals, he proceeds, in language and thought which are reminiscent of the *Octavian* of Minucius Felix, to demonstrate the evidence of a divine Creator in the orderliness of creation and the obvious design in nature, which leads him to a vehement denial that

Chance or Fate could exercise any control over the universe. This denial would appear to be quite inconsistent with the erection of a temple of Tyche at Constantinople as well as with Constantine's sanction of the employment of the *haruspex* in the event of fire or lightning, and in the interest of physical health. In all matters that transcend human understanding the wisdom of the Creator should be magnified, and the causes of these mysteries attributed to Him alone. God is abundantly supplied with all things needful for man, and He bestows them in proportion as they are more or less essential to man's well-being. Those gifts which are concerned chiefly with luxury rather than with necessity are bestowed more sparingly.

The philosophers of the past have fallen into grievous errors—some of them into serious danger—because they sought after universal knowledge. Socrates was guilty of the very error with which his accusers charged him. Pythagoras was proved to be a liar. Plato, the most refined of them all, believed in two gods; while the Christian believes that the Logos is both the Son of God and also God. The poets as well are shown to be unsafe guides, for their function is to produce an illusion, and fiction can only deceive men. The essence of truth lies in the perfect correspondence between that which is spoken and that which actually exists.

An exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation follows, in which the author claims to be enlightened solely by the gift of God and to owe no debt to human teachers. The pre-existence of the Son; His Virgin birth; His entrance into the world to fulfill the Will of the Father; His indwelling by the Holy Spirit; His manifestation of the power of God in His wisdom as well as in His works of wonder—all are clearly asserted. The loss of the blessings that might have been theirs by those who wilfully refuse this divine revelation, and the honor due to the faithful, and in particular to the martyrs, are the inevitable result of the choice of man's will. Since man is far higher than the rest of creation, he should aspire to thoughts and acts of virtue, to which Christ invites him. These can be attained only through divine aid, not through reliance on his own resources.

The prophets foretold not only the coming of Christ but the overthrow of idols and of cities devoted to idolatry as well. Pagan sacrifices at some places involved the offering up of innocent men, as well as that of animals. Hence the pollution of these sacrifices made necessary a suitable retribution. Constantine himself, presumably when he accompanied Diocletian on his campaign in Egypt, beheld the utter destruction of the city of Memphis. Moses brought that same land to desolation through the use of prayer and supplication alone. Moses and Daniel as well as the three children in the fiery furnace (his account of whom shows glaring discrepancies with that in the Scriptures) were inspired by Christ to suffer, and have been sources of inspiration even to the wise among the heathen nations.

The Erythraean Sibyl declared in prophetic verses the coming of Christ and the impending judgment of man. These verses are in the form of an acrostic, the initial letters of the successive lines spelling the words, *Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour Cross*. The lines, which are also quoted in part by St. Augustine in his work, *Of the City of God,* are a *Dies Irae,* depicting in lively and graphic words the terrors of the Day of Judgment. The inclusion of these lines attributed to the Sibyl are irrefutable evidence that this Oration was not prepared for the Emperor by Eusebius, for Eusebius emphatically denies the possibility of the Sibyl uttering true prophecies of Christ. The Fourth Eclogue of Vergil also foretells the coming of Christ and His Virgin birth. Although the pagan poet was compelled to speak darkly, yet his words could not have been spoken of a mere man. Still unbelievers in their ignorance fail to recognize their own origin.

The Emperor ascribes all his victories and his many blessings to Christ, while the persecution of the tyrant Maximin Daia served but to increase the glory of religion. The Christian religion demands a life of virtue and gives assurance of a Judgment and future reward or punishment. The persecutors Decius, Valerian, and Aurelian met a wretched end. Valerian, a captive at the court of the Persian King, led about in chains while still clad in the imperial purple, his skin finally preserved as a trophy, was a crowning example of divine retribution. Diocletian, of unsound mind, ever after the fire in the palace at Nicomedia caused by a stroke of lightning, lived in continuous dread. This and his own consciousness of guilt induced him to the persecution. His deeds were responsible for civil strife, and the example of his fate, like that of the other persecutors, is convincing proof of God's Providence and of His loving care for the welfare of men. Constantine attributes all his services to his subjects to divine inspiration. Pure and genuine faith in God, prayer and earnest supplication, have enabled him to win victory over his enemies and to bestow benefits on mankind. While man may sometimes err, God is not the cause of his error. To Him should be given devout thanks for all the blessings now enjoyed, both personal and public.

It would seem obvious that Constantine cannot have been the author of this address. It may have been composed for him by another and have been delivered by the Emperor. A great deal of the material in it has been taken from Lactantius, although the Sibylline section would appear to be from a different source from that known to him. It may be a composite of bits prepared for the Emperor's use by different rhetoricians, but the influence of Lactantius is most apparent. There are passages that have been pronounced definitely Platonic. It has been dated by some scholars who have made a careful study of it as early as 313, while others have pronounced it later than the Council of Nicaea. As has been indicated, it contains serious deviations from the letters of Constantine that seem to be of unquestioned genuineness. It would appear that what we have is a Greek version, rewritten and amplified by some rhetorician, of an address originally prepared and delivered by the Emperor. It is quite impossible to segregate the genuine elements contributed by Constantine from the contributions of the editor. The original draft may have been chiefly the work of a rhetorician, such as Lactantius. It probably represents the sort of address that Constantine made in his efforts to dispose his subjects towards the acceptance of the Christian religion, but it would be unsafe to assume that he was personally responsible for any particular statements made in it as evidence for the Emperor's personal belief or attitude towards any of the subjects of which it treats. The absence of any reference to Licinius among the persecutors would appear to indicate that this address was delivered prior to Constantine's final victory over him. It has seemed best, however, to defer any consideration of it until the opportunity arose for a brief discussion in connection with the Oration of Eusebius. We may quite safely accept Eusebius' statement that Constantine was in the habit of delivering addresses, which he probably regarded as one of his functions as the "Bishop of those outside the Church."

To what extent Constantine had completed his dynastic arrangements before his death we cannot be certain. The assignment of important provinces to Delmatius and Hannibalianus would seem to indicate that pressure had been exerted on him by influential members of his court; and is quite at variance with the statement of Eusebius. His admiring biographer asserts that he divided the whole of his dominions as though he were allotting a patrimonial inheritance to his three sons. It would appear from this statement that Constantine's concern was really for the interests of his own immediate family, and in no sense for the welfare of the Empire which he had won. The incidents that immediately followed the death of the Emperor would seem to indicate a secret will which was not disclosed until a later time. Eusebius goes on to tell with what care Constantine had prepared his sons for the responsibilities they were to assume. He had been deeply concerned to train them with true religious principles, acting himself as their guide to the knowledge of sacred things and appointing men of approved piety to be their instructors. We are told also that he assigned them the most accomplished teachers of secular learning, by some of whom they were instructed in the arts of war, while by others they were trained in political and legal science. Eusebius assures us that the sons of Constantine were a "Trinity of Princes—models of deportment, piety and modesty. Their later careers indicate that the literary bishop was blind, deluded, or deliberately mendacious. The Emperor may have done his utmost to provide suitable education and training for his sons and may have felt convinced that he bestowed on them the blessings and inspiration of an all but flawless example, but the internecine strife that ensued after his death and their personal vices brought no praise either to their father's example or to their carefully chosen instructors. Civil war and family strife were sad fruits to be borne by paternal solicitude and painstaking instruction. Aristotle is not to be held accountable for the career of Alexander—certainly not for his vices—nor would it be just to blame Constantine or the tutors he selected for his sons for their failure to deport themselves as Christian princes.

After the celebration of his Tricennalia Constantine seems to have been concerned with the completion of the church that was to serve as a mausoleum for him and for his successors. It was apparently at this time also that he received an embassy from India, which roused great interest among the inhabitants of Constantinople, for there were in its train members of races unknown to them, and gifts were presented to the Emperor, not only precious stones, but animals from remote parts of the world which caused great consternation and wonder. Much of his time was given, according to Eusebius, to military and civil legislation and to the composition and delivery of orations, by means of which he hoped to attract his pagan subjects to the adoption of the Christian religion. He seems always to have been fond of conferring with individuals and with groups; and such conferences, which frequently made him the victim of the avarice and hypocrisy of his favorites, claimed more and more of his time. The Persians, hoping for a settlement of terms more agreeable to them, sent an embassy to him, but, although the Emperor is reported to have received them hospitably, it was of no avail. Realizing that the success of Hannibalianus must be followed up by a more decisive victory, the Emperor began to make ready to set out himself for the East. He conferred with a group of bishops, some of whom he planned to take with him on this expedition, and caused a tent to be constructed in the form of a church to accommodate his devotions, in company with the bishops, while in the field.

In the midst of these preparations Constantine fell ill with what appeared to be a slight bodily ailment, but ere long he developed more serious symptoms. In the hope of finding relief, he visited Drepanum in Bithynia, the birthplace of his mother, which he had rededicated in her honor with the name of Helenopolis. Here, in the church which was the final resting place of the bones of Lucian of Antioch, for whom his mother had had great veneration, where he would be conscious of the hallowed memories of Helena and reminded of her devotion and piety, he prayed earnestly for recovery.

When Constantine realized that his life was drawing to a close, he determined to return to Nicomedia and to receive baptism that he might obtain purification from his sins, firmly believing, as Eusebius tells us, that, through the efficacy of the mystical words and the salutary waters, he would be cleansed. Before starting for Nicomedia, however, he first made confession of his sins in the church at Helenopolis, kneeling on the pavement. Then it was that he received the imposition of hands, that marked his admission as a catechumen, for hitherto he had not even been enrolled among the number of those who were seeking to enter the Church. After this he made his way to Nicomedia and, summoning the bishops to meet him in the suburbs of the town, he addressed them, asking that he might be received into the Church by the sacrament of Baptism. He explained his long delay by saying that it had been his purpose to visit the Holy Land and to receive this sacrament in the waters of the river Jordan, "wherein our Saviour, for our example, is recorded to have been baptized." But since it is God's pleasure that he receive this blessing here, let there be no hesitation or delay. The word which Constantine is reported to have used on this occasion (amphibolia) has been rendered by some translators as "duplicity," thus making it appear that hitherto the Emperor had been playing a part aiming to be a Christian to the Christians, and a pagan to the pagans; but that he has now decided to come out definitely on one side and to take his stand as a Christian. There is no justification for such an interpretation of Constantine's words. The word does signify "ambiguity" or "doubtfulness," but as Constantine used it, it is extremely unlikely that it was equivalent to a confession that hitherto he had been acting as a hypocrite, and that now he was resolved to show himself in his true colors. His actions had been clear evidence of his convictions long before this time. Still more clearly indicative of his true position had been his edicts and his letters. He had delayed for years to take the vital step, not because he was unwilling to let the world know his true belief, for that he had preached from the housetops; but he knew that he was travelling over a hazardous course. No other had gone before to show him the way or to indicate to him where he might err. The office of an absolute monarch who was engaged in the establishment of a dynasty was beset by many perils and temptations. The discipline of the Church would demand, even from one in his position, public penances and humiliation, as Theodosius was to learn somewhat later, as the penalty for such sins as he was most likely to commit. To be numbered publicly among one of the groups of penitents would involve a degree of ignominy and shame inconceivable for the Emperor who, even more than his predecessors, had surrounded himself with Oriental pomp, and had presented the appearance before his subjects of one more than human, almost divine.

The Church labored for years to abolish the shameful practice of those who were called "Clinics," who, in defiance of the responsibility incumbent on them as converts to the Christian religion, sought freedom from the moral law during their active years, and a safe and easy way to forgiveness and eternal bliss at the end, by postponing their baptism until their deathbed. The father of St. Augustine will be found a little later among those who thus sought to evade their responsibilities, yet attempted to make certain of salvation at last. The Church discountenanced the practice. It was regarded as a barrier to entering the priesthood. In the early Church there had been some who had even questioned its validity, although this opinion was not sustained by the Church; and the story of St. Genesius—the actor who was baptized in a play that satirized the "clinic" baptisms, declared himself, after his baptism on the stage, a Christian, and then became a martyr—is indicative of the extraordinary problems that were sometimes presented to the Church. The twelfth canon of the Council of Neo-Caesarea early in the fourth century declared, "If any man is baptized only in time of sickness, he shall not be ordained a priest; because his faith was not voluntary, but as it were of constraint; except his subsequent faith and diligence recommend him, or else the scarcity of men make it necessary to ordain him." This would seem to refer only to those whose baptism was delayed through their own fault. But, if any man might have been regarded as having justification for postponing his baptism, that justification might be found in the difficult path that lay before the first Caesar who publicly proclaimed himself a Christian.

After the ceremony Constantine arrayed himself in the shining white garments of the neophyte and, refusing to resume the purple, reclined on a couch of purest white. Eusebius quotes what he tells us are the exact words of the Emperor after his baptism. He expressed the gratitude of his heart for having received the gift of immortality and for having been made a partaker of the divine Light. He relates also that Constantine expressed his compassion for the unhappy condition of those who were still strangers to such blessings as he now enjoyed; of how he answered the tears and lamentations of his tribunes and generals with the assurance that he was now in possession of true life, and that he earnestly desired to linger in this present world no longer.

Then, after completing the necessary arrangement of his affairs, bequeathing an annual donation to the people of his imperial city, and apportioning his Empire among his children, he died at noon on the Feast of Pentecost, May 22, 337. His body, enclosed in a golden coffin covered by a purple pall, was borne from Nicomedia and placed with great pomp in the throne room of the imperial palace at Constantinople. There it lay, guarded day and night by the chief officers of the army and the highest officials of the court. There, even in death, Eusebius relates, he still received the genuflexions and ceremonial honors that had been offered him when he was alive. For three months he continued to rule, although dead. This would seem to be clear evidence of the efficiency of the system of administration that he had inaugurated. At last, at the point of death, the first Caesar to call himself a Christian had been received into the Body of the Church. But he had been baptized by the court prelate, Eusebius, the unscrupulous, Arianizing Bishop of Nicomedia.

All of Constantine's sons were absent at the time of their father's death. Constantius was the first to arrive, and he assumed charge of the funeral ceremonies. The Senate at Rome requested that the Emperor's body be laid to rest in the ancient capital, but it had been Constantine's wish that he be buried in the Church of the Apostles, called at first the Church of the Holy Trinity, which he had built with that particular purpose. There he had prepared a splendid sarcophagus where he might rest, a thirteenth apostle, among the memorials of the Twelve whom he honored. In the East he was revered as a saint and was given the title of "isapostolos," "equal to the apostles," a title which was also accorded his mother Helena. In Rome he received no such recognition by the Church, but pagan Rome numbered him among the gods. He was the only emperor—the only human being—ever to be awarded this unique combination of honors. In Rome it was the apotheosis of Caesar; in Constantinople it was the recognition of the servant of Christ. Which was right? Was it possible for the same individual to be both?

The imperial rites were observed first. Then his body was turned over to the Church. The dead Emperor's son, Constantius, although the chief mourner, is said to have hastened from the Church with his soldiers before the most solemn part of the funeral ceremonies. He was not baptized and, unlike his father, was not permitted to be present at the sacred Mysteries of the Church. It was the prelates and other clergy who, with the populace of Constantinople, gave the first Christian Emperor his burial. Coins were issued which bore on one side the figure of the Emperor with his head closely veiled; on the other side he was depicted as seated in a four-horse chariot and borne to heaven by a celestial hand outstretched from the clouds. This device might suggest to the Christians the ascent of the prophet; to the pagans the hand might appear as the hand of Jove.

Chapter XVI

CONSTANTINE'S BENEFACTIONS

It has already been seen that Constantine's conversion, which became operative immediately in the proclamation of the so-called Edict of Milan, was followed almost at once by the recall of exiles, the release of Christian confessors who had been imprisoned, together with the restoration of the liberties, dignities, and positions of which they had been deprived. Christian soldiers were permitted to return to the army, or, if they preferred, might be given a certificate of honorable discharge. The inheritances of martyrs were given to their next of kin or, in the absence of surviving relatives, they were given to the Church. Church property was restored, even when its restitution involved expense to the State. By these measures the Emperor attempted at once to rectify the harm done by the persecution. It was his aim to reestablish conditions as they had existed prior to the first edict of Diocletian. Within a very short time he put forth an edict in which, adverting to the savage cruelty of the Emperors with whom he had been associated, he recalled the humanity and piety of his father.

There was a tale that Apollo had given an oracle in which he declared that the righteous men hindered him from speaking the truth. Moreover Constantine had heard even Diocletian say that enquiry from one of the pagan priests with regard to the righteous ones on earth had elicited the response that they were the Christians. Yet, despite this warning, Diocletian had proceeded to inaugurate a bloody persecution of the followers of Christ, while the barbarians had received them kindly. Here he is probably referring to the recent conversion of the Armenians to Christianity. Now that divine vengeance has overtaken the perpetrators of the persecution, acknowledging the victory that has attended his own adoption of the standard of the Cross, he announces his purpose to continue under this standard while advancing to meet his foes, and expresses the hope that he may see all his subjects become Christians, but promises that he will compel none to do so. In these words we can probably see Constantine's own interpretation of the principles set forth in the Edict of Milan. Pagans are to meet with no interference from the officers of the State, but they are to know the Emperor's personal belief and preference and his hope that they may repent of the error of their ways, and soon take their part in helping him to realize the religious unity of the Empire, which can be achieved only through their acceptance of the religion that the Emperor has himself adopted. He makes it clear that those who hold other opinions will be permitted to continue to hold them and that the temples are to remain open so that those who prefer to do so may still be free to practise their own forms of worship in them. At about the same time Constantine wrote to Eusebius and to other bishops encouraging them to rebuild their ruined churches, and also to build new ones. He authorized them to demand what was needful for this work from the provincial governors. He gave orders also that generous grants should be made from public funds. He began to appoint Christians to high positions of public office and, in the case of pagans holding such offices, they were forbidden to take part publicly in the offering of idolatrous sacrifices.

We have already mentioned the concessions granted to the clergy of the Catholic Church with regard to public duties, as well as the exemption of the Church from the payment of "*tributum*" and "*annona,*" the customary taxes in money and in kind. The exemptions granted the clergy so accelerated the rush to enter their ranks that seven years later ordination was limited to those whose moderate circumstances would provide certainty that their ordination would involve no financial loss to the State. Within a short time a series of laws affecting the life of the Church followed. The Catholic Church was to be protected from annoyance at the hands of heretics in the carrying out of its proper functions. The laws of Augustus which disqualified the unmarried and the childless from inheritance were annulled, undoubtedly that there might be no discrimination against a celibate clergy. The manumission of slaves in churches in the presence of the bishop and other clergy was made legal and valid. A little later it became lawful to make wills in favor of the Catholic Church. Sunday was raised to the rank of a pagan holiday. The fact that in this law the first day of the week is referred to as "the venerable day of the Sun," instead of as "the Lord's Day," is not significant. This same terminology was used by St. Jerome and other Fathers of the Church and it is extremely unlikely that, in the midst of a series of enactments for the well-being of the Church, one sole measure should have been introduced to gratify the worshippers of Mithras. The work of the courts was to be suspended on Sunday and the city population was to refrain from work, but an exception was made in the case of agricultural labor. Ere long this law was amended to make lawful the manumission of slaves on Sunday. While the public ceremonies of the temples were allowed to continue, the private consultation of *haruspices* and the practice of magic rites were forbidden. In the case of buildings struck by lightning, and in those rites which had as their object the prevention of disease and drought, the consultation of *haruspices* was still authorized.

In these earliest legislative acts after his conversion Constantine evidently aimed to place the Christian religion on an equality with the pagan religions in the West. Most of the new enactments do no more than afford the new religion the same privileges and the same protection that the old religions had been enjoying and still continued to enjoy. The law elevating Sunday to the rank of a pagan holiday might be regarded by the devotees of the rites of Mithras as a mark of imperial favor towards them. It was only when the provision for the manumission of slaves on Sunday was added that there was of necessity a definite expression of special regard for the Christians. Licinius, who had no fondness for the new religion, was in control of the East. In the West, where Constantine was now supreme, paganism was far stronger than it was in the East, was intolerant towards the Christians, and was most jealous of its own prerogatives. It was essential that Constantine move slowly and warily, and, if possible, maintain an equilibrium between the two religions. He continued to hold the title of *Pontifex Maximus,* as indeed he did after he had become sole ruler of the Empire. But this title, which marked him as the nominal head of the pagan state religion, involved no definite authority on the part of the Emperor to control the exercise of the pagan cults. Complete religious neutrality on the part of the State had been proclaimed in the Edict of Milan. Christianity was to be recognized as one of the lawful permitted religions with full rights accorded to its adherents to all freedom in the practice of their religion, and with enjoyment of the same exemptions and privileges as those already granted to the other lawful religions. This principle would appear to be evident in practically all of Constantine's legislation during the period between his conversion and his victory over Licinius. Those who had for a long time lived in constant peril, hampered by countless restrictions, now had a safe place and complete liberty within the Empire.

Still during this same period he was constantly involved in the Donatist controversy; he was making a sharp distinction between the Catholics and the schismatics; he was making evident in his letters his personal loyalty to the Christian religion, which he found it expedient to keep in the background in his official legislation. It is *our* God, Who "does not allow man's condition to wander too long in the darkness, nor permit the hateful wills of some men to prevail to such an extent that He does not grant men a new opportunity for conversion to justice by opening up before them through its most glorious light a way to salvation." Thus he identifies himself with the bishops in attendance at the Council of Arles in a common devotion to the God Whose servant he calls himself. He is distressed by the schism particularly because it provides an occasion for those who are known to be averse to this most holy religion to indulge in carping criticism of it. Just as Diocletian had had a dream of an empire united by a religious unity, and had for this very reason sought to enforce the conformity of the Christians to the religion of the State, so Constantine, from the moment of his acceptance of Christianity, had a similar vision to be achieved through the unity of the Catholic Church which would in turn, through the Emperor's encouragement and assistance, attract those outside the fold to enter in and share its fellowship. In the meantime prudence demanded that he proceed slowly in his official acts, and that he try to maintain outwardly the balance between the two hostile elements.

With the defeat of Licinius, Constantine, as sole Emperor, found himself in quite a different position. The liberty granted to the pagans was henceforth of quite an inferior quality. He had already referred to them as those "who delight in error." They might, if they chose, still have their "temples of lies"; but "ours is the edifice of truth." Some are said to pretend that the use of the temples is forbidden them; "such indeed would have been our earnest recommendation, were it not that the rebellious spirit of those wicked errors still continues fixed obstinately in the minds of some." It is hardly possible for one who has this point of view to continue long to practise a real neutrality.

The notorious immorality of the rites practised in certain temples provided him with a ready pretext for demolishing them. The temples of Aesculapius in the Lebanon, of Argae in Cilicia, of Heliopolis (Baalbak) in Phoenicia fell under this condemnation. The embellishment of the new capital was made possible by removing statues in bronze and marble, as well as other decorations, from the temple of Apollo at Delphi as well as from other temples in Greece. The people of Hispellum (Spello) in Umbria petitioned him to permit them to erect a temple in his honor in their town. His reply is clearly indicative of the change that has now taken place in his policy. They may indeed erect a temple, but no sacrifices are to be offered in it. So limited are its functions that it would appear to become little more than a community hall dedicated in honor of the family of Constantine. Shortly before his contest with Licinius, in celebration of his recent victories, the Gothic Games in February and the Sarmatian Games in November were established. Evidently it was still necessary to show outward regard for his pagan subjects and for their wishes, but Constantine's real sentiments with regard to the games of the amphitheatre would ere long be made manifest in his regulations for Constantinople.

The favor shown towards the Christians by Constantine after he became sole Emperor prompted conversions to the religion of his adoption in vast numbers. When Christianity not only ceased to be dangerous but also became fashionable, it was inevitable that large numbers of those who wished to ingratiate themselves with him should declare themselves Christians. We are reminded of the imperial favor of Maximin Daia perpetuated on bronze pillars for the lasting gratification of the towns that rejected Christians, as we observe that renunciation of the pagan gods has now become a passport to winning the good-will of Constantine. Mass conversions have never been a great blessing to the Church and the accessions that were due to the inspiration of imperial favor at this time were rather a source of weakness than an added strength. At Antaradus (Tortosa) on the coast of Phoenicia the inhabitants destroyed their temples and broke to bits their idols. Constantine rebuilt the town and bestowed upon it his own name. The port of Gaza, Maiouma, followed the example of Antaradus and was raised to the status of a city and given the name of the Emperor's sister, Constantia. Yet Gaza preferred to remain pagan. After destroying the temple of Venus at Heliopolis, Constantine undertook the conversion of the city but, although he erected a large church and sent thither a number of clergy and organized generous distributions of charity, nothing was achieved.

Soon Constantine's special favor for the Christians became manifest in the erection of churches and in a special devotion to the sacred places mentioned in the Gospels and in other parts of the Bible. Despite the hazards involved, pious pilgrimages had long been popular among Christian people. Christians still felt that they knew the exact spot where their Lord had been crucified and the location of the tomb in which His Body had been laid to rest. Biblical geography had been carefully studied, and Eusebius devoted a whole series of his works to this subject. After the cessation of the great persecution, pilgrimages to the Holy Land must have been resumed very quickly. The itinerary of a pilgrim from Bordeaux has survived as our most ancient witness to the magnificent church buildings which Constantine and the members of the imperial family erected at the Holy Places.

The colony of Aelia Capitolina, founded by Hadrian, occupied the site of ancient Jerusalem. The Capitol itself, dedicated, after the manner of provincial Capitols, to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, stood on the site of the ancient Temple. The temple of Venus stood in the midst of the colonnade which had been built opposite the Capitol. According to tradition the platform on which the temple of Venus stood had been constructed immediately over the place where the Crucifixion of our Lord took place, as well as over the location of his tomb. The Bishop of Aelia, who had been in attendance at the Council of Nicaea, had at that time obtained permission from Constantine to excavate the site. At length a tomb hollowed in the rock was discovered. Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine,* describes the excavations made by Macarius. The Holy Sepulchre was discovered and Constantine ordered a church to be erected on the site in honor of the Resurrection.

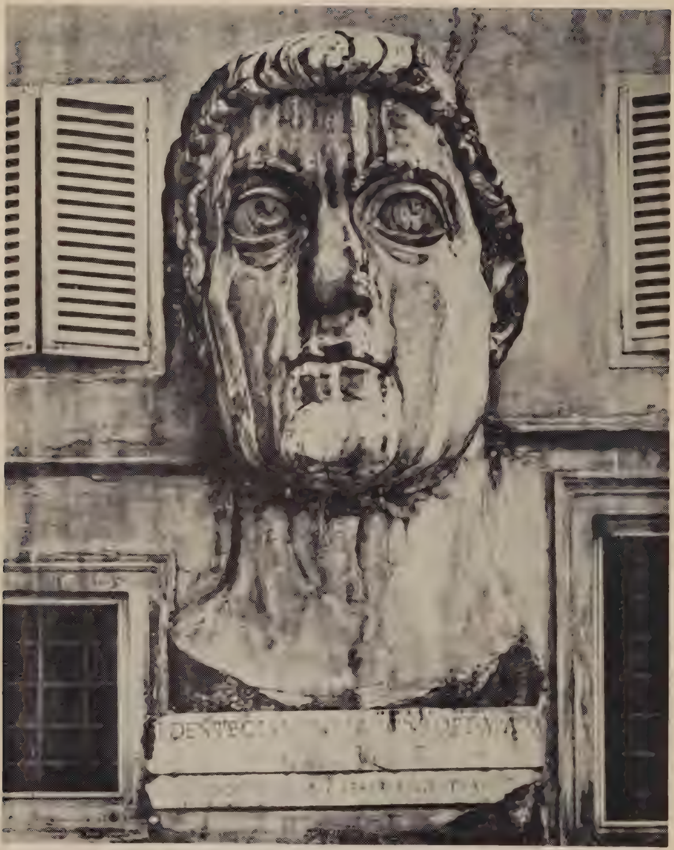
The Empress Helena, despite her advanced age, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as did also Eutropia, the widow of Maximian Herculius. The discovery and veneration of sacred places became an absorbing interest in the lives of these two aged women. Tradition has associated the name of Helena with the discovery of the Cross on which our Lord was crucified. We only know with certainty that very soon after her visit the wood of the Cross was venerated at Jerusalem, while fragments of it were detached and sent to many places where they were treasured. Twenty years after the visit of Helena the veneration of the Cross is attested by St. Cyril of Jerusalem speaking at this very spot.

Eusebius describes in detail the erection of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was built by Constantine in honor of the Resurrection. It was the Emperor's aim that it should surpass in beauty all the churches in the world. Its columns and marbles were to be the most precious and serviceable; if the ceiling were panelled, it should be decorated with gold. It had an open space of great extent around it, paved with finely polished stone, and enclosed on three sides with porticoes. Within it was floored with marble slabs of various colors, while the exterior was faced with polished stones exactly fitted together. The roof was covered with lead to afford protection from storms, while its inner side was adorned with panel work, extended in a series of connected compartments, like a vast sea, over the whole church; overlaid throughout with purest gold. There were two porticoes on each side, with upper and lower ranges of pillars, which also had their roofs ornamented with gold. The exterior porticoes were supported by columns of immense size, while those within rested on piles of stone beautifully adorned on the surface. There were three gates at the east end to receive the multitudes who entered. Opposite this entrance he describes, as the crowning feature of the whole church, the hemisphere, which rose to the very summit, encircled by twelve columns, having their capitals embellished with silver bowls of great size, which were a special gift from the Emperor himself. This would seem to have been the dome building over the tomb, which contained the altar. The account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land which has come down to us from a Spanish nun, known as Etheria, written in the last part of the fourth century, describes, in Jerusalem, the Anastasis, or Church of the Resurrection, on the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, together with its baptistery; the Sanctuary of the Cross, on the traditional site of Golgotha, where the wood of the Cross was kept; as well as the Martyrium, or greater church, which she describes as behind the Cross; all of which were erected by Constantine in 337. She finds herself powerless to describe the beauty of decoration of these churches—their silken curtains and vessels of gold adorned with jewels. She states that the inner beauty of these churches, replete with gold, mosaics and costly marbles, is to be attributed to the influence of Helena, the Emperor's mother. Helena herself built churches at Bethlehem and at the Mount of Olives, and left behind her in the Holy Land memories of generous gifts to the inhabitants of various towns, as well as grateful recollections of charities dispensed freely to the poor and needy. In addition to the churches which Constantine built at Jerusalem, he built a new church at Antioch, where the members of the Church were first called Christians; for the old church building, which was reputed to date from the time of the apostles, was no longer sufficiently large to accommodate the increased number of Christians. At Nicomedia, the capital where he had spent a great part of his life, he also built a church. Of the churches erected by the Emperor in his new capital, we have already spoken in connection with the founding of Constantinople.

At Rome Constantine's benefactions to the Church seem to date from the early days of his conversion. Rome he rarely visited; it had lost its importance in the imperial scheme; even the traditional appeal to the Pope in ecclesiastical problems was ignored during his reign. Yet he had an antiquarian interest in its past, as well as a reverence for the place where the Prince of the apostles had had his chair, and where both he and St. Paul had suffered martyrdom.

We have already seen that the Lateran palace, which had passed to Fausta, became the episcopal palace. Ere long the basilica known as the *domus ecclesiae* was erected beside it, the original church of St. John in the Lateran. Close at hand the baptistery was built, probably on the site of the Nympheum of Fausta's palace. Basilicas were built in honor of St. Peter and St. Paul, at the traditional places of their martyrdom. The latter, as well as the basilica which Constantine built in honor of St. Lawrence, were quite small. The princesses of Constantine's family built churches as well. Constantia, his daughter, was particularly devoted to an imperial villa, situated on the Via Nomentana, near the cemetery in which was the tomb of St. Agnes. She is reputed to have erected a basilica there with a baptistery, which still exists. This baptistery, which contains the earliest Christian mosaics, was probably built by Constantine as a mausoleum for his daughter, whose sarcophagus of porphyry, with decorations that repeat the beautiful arabesques of flowers and birds found in the mosaics, is now in the Vatican. It became a church in the thirteenth century, and was dedicated, not to the Emperor's daughter, who, as described by the historians of the period, was an incarnate fury, never weary of inciting the savage disposition of Gallus, who was her second husband, and as insatiable as he in her thirst for human blood, but to a sainted nun, who bore the same name. At the foot of the Palatine is another small church, dedicated in honor of St. Anastasia, which is also said to have been built by Constantine. This was the name of one of his sisters, who, as the wife of Bassianus, might have sat as Empress on the hill under which the church stands, had it not been that her husband was detected in the plot of his brother Senecio, which preceded the open conflict between Constantine and Licinius. This church too is dedicated, not in honor of the princess, but of a martyr of the persecution of Diocletian. It has been asserted, on the basis of the dedications of the churches built by Constantine in New Rome, that he never reared a church in honor of a person, but only those that were dedicated to abstractions. "Holy Wisdom," the Divine Logos, "Peace" sound like abstract qualities, yet they are expressions of divine attributes. In support of this theory it is asserted that Constantine did not erect a church to the "Holy Apostles" in his new capital, but rather to "Divine Power" (Dunamis).

This assertion, however, which would involve the denial of the erection by Constantine of any of the churches in Rome that we have mentioned, rests on most uncertain evidence; while the tradition regarding the churches reported to have been built by him at Rome has been well supported by archaeological investigation and fresh evidence is constantly coming to light. A great deal of the material in the *Liber Pontificalis* with regard to the erection of churches at Rome by Constantine is of much later date, and shows a definite affinity with the legend of the baptism of the Emperor by Sylvester and the Donation. An inscription from the outside of the old St. Peter's on the front above the portico has come to light, which expressed the gratitude of Constantine beneath his likeness. From this inscription it appears that the Emperor had suffered ten months from a severe sickness. He had given up all hope, for medicines made him only worse, but finally the intercession of St. Peter had availed to bring about the restoration of his health. "Oh to what honor has Christ raised the Apostle!" the Emperor exclaims. "The life which Christ gave me was again granted me by Peter." It is impossible to know the exact date at which this inscription was affixed to the basilica, but it is possible that in it we may have the real origin of the legend of Constantine's leprosy and of its being cured by his baptism. Many of the bricks of which the early basilica is constructed, large numbers of which were pulled out during the demolition of the old apse, bear the stamp of Constantine. There are others of earlier periods, but none of a later era. These bricks have been found nowhere else in Rome, and would appear to have been made expressly for the construction of the basilica of St. Peter. At the present time excavations and investigations about the original tomb of the Apostle are actually in progress which would appear to give added testimony to the construction of the earliest basilica by Constantine.



Phot. Alinari

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

Constantine was active in the construction, completion, or restoration of various secular buildings in the ancient capital. We have already referred to his completion of the great basilica begun by Maxentius, which, although two-thirds of it has now disappeared, remains the most impressive group of early Roman remains still existing in the Forum. At the end of the great hall and in front of the terminal apse of the central nave there was a colossal statue of Constantine seated, which has long since been removed to the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Constantine is said to have restored and beautified the Circus Maximus and to have erected a marble hall, the so-called Janus Quadrifons, in the Velabrum, beside which the church of St. George was later built. Of the great baths that he constructed in the vicinity of those of Diocletian, some remains can still be seen in the Colonna gardens. It is inconceivable that his fondness for building should have found expression at Rome exclusively in secular buildings, or that tradition so well authenticated and witnessed by archaeological studies should be entirely erroneous with regard to the churches to be attributed to him there.

The laws enacted by Constantine after he became sole Emperor give evidence of his anxiety still further to safeguard his Christian subjects and in the social, economic and moral life of the people to establish standards more in conformity with Christian principles. All attempts to compel Christians to take part in pagan celebrations are forbidden, and severe penalties are provided for any violation of this prohibition. There are no laws surviving from the time of Constantine which definitely forbid all sacrifices to the pagan gods or require the general destruction of pagan temples. There is a law of his son, Constantius II, which begins with these words: "Let superstition be at an end; let the folly of sacrifices be abolished. Whoever has dared, in the face of the law of the divine prince, our father, and of the mandate of our own clemency, to offer sacrifices . . ." If such a law ever existed, it has disappeared. Moreover it would seem to be at variance with what is definitely known to have been Constantine's actual practice. Apparently he was hoping that men might be educated away from paganism to Christianity and that eventually paganism would be destroyed. In the meantime it was evidently his plan that it should be tolerated as a necessary evil. In the East the offices of state were secularized, but in the West pagans still held important offices, and the sacrifices that were customary at civic functions were evidently continued. The business of the Senate was still conducted at the altar of Victory. It is doubtful if any single temple was destroyed by his orders in the West, while in the East such destruction seems to have been limited to the few that were centers of licentious and immoral rites. He does not appear to have attempted to abolish any of the priesthoods that were in good repute nor to have deprived them of any part of their customary income. Paganism was losing popularity and prestige through the Emperor's adoption of Christianity and he could afford to wait for the final outcome which he desired. It is quite unlikely that Constantine showed less forbearance towards his pagan subjects than he manifested in his relations with schismatics, heretics, and criminals. His reputation for mildness towards these three classes of offenders seems to have been well deserved. It is difficult to account for the statement made in the law of Constantius II, as well as for what St. Jerome relates regarding a law of Constantine, which required the wholesale destruction of temples. Eusebius would seem to imply not only that Constantine required that all temples be destroyed, but also that all sacrifices were prohibited as well. We may be quite certain that if such a law ever existed, its provisions were not enforced. No doubt pagan temples, once the imperial favor was withdrawn, suffered. We have already mentioned a law which provided that heathen temples might be left unfinished. Libanius, a thorough pagan, says that Constantine did not at all alter the legal religion, while Zosimus states definitely that he tolerated pagan worship. It is inconceivable, had Constantine promulgated and enforced any such laws, that the Christians, at a later time, should have been moved, as they were, to ask for legislation of this kind.

There were numerous laws put forth by Constantine during this later period which conferred special privileges on the Catholic churches and clergy, but did not apply to those who were in heresy or schism. The most significant of the laws of this class was that of 326 which conferred on the bishops the authority to act as judges in civil suits. Cases might be transferred to the bishop's court from the civil court, and the decisions of the newly established court were to be regarded as final even in the case of a pagan who was required to appear there rather than in the civil court by a Christian litigant. The civil courts were, no doubt, in many instances corrupt. More and more the authority of the bishop in various communities was being recognized, and Constantine evidently hoped that he could rely on their adherence to principles of justice. This law, however, by creating courts of a new type endowed with very broad powers and quite independent of the secular courts, marked an important step in the direction of a union between Church and State.

In the social realm the provisions for the protection of family life are significant. The head of a family was no longer permitted to claim the right to expose his children or to sell them into slavery. The father who took his son's life was guilty of murder, and no child could be adopted into another family without the father's consent. A son now had the legal right to all that he might earn, both in the military service and in the civil service, and, by later legislation, this right was extended to cover all that might come to him from other sources as well.

A definite improvement is to be observed in the laws with regard to slavery. All thought of a general emancipation of slaves was, of course, absent. Many centuries of Christianity would be needed to prepare the way for such a measure. The provision for manumission in church in the presence of the bishop and even on Sundays, when all ordinary business was forbidden, was, however, a definite encouragement to individual emancipation. Slaves were no longer to be treated with cruelty. A definite distinction was made between the death of a slave that resulted from punishment for misconduct, and death that was the result of cruelty and abuse. In the latter case the masters were punishable. The families of slaves were not to be separated. Crucifixion as a punishment was forbidden and criminals could no longer be branded in the face, but only on the hand, that the face, made in the image of the heavenly beauty, might not be marred.

There were also edicts in favor of widows, of orphans, and of the poor, as well as provisions for charitable institutions. Various forms of immorality and immoral rites of all sorts were forbidden. Particularly drastic were the laws against unchastity. The punishment of adultery, as well as of all persons involved in sins of this nature, was most severe. It has been stated that Constantine's measures in this regard were so strict that they could not be enforced and that they produced results worse than the evils they sought to correct. At all events it is most important to bear in mind the fact that he was pronounced in the measures he invoked for the punishment of offences against chastity, in view of the charges made against him later by his nephew Julian. Concubinage, which had hitherto been generally regarded as a moral institution, was now definitely prohibited. It is difficult, in view of this legislation aimed at the purifying of society, to explain the fact that under Constantine prostitutes were not only recognized, but were made liable to a tax such as that which was applied to more reputable vocations.

When we consider the traditions and temperament of the Roman people, as well as the fact that Constantine himself had, early in his career, caused the Frankish kings and their vanquished tribesmen to be thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Treves, there is no bit of his legislation during this period more striking than his prohibition of gladiatorial games. No such measure was effective, however, for a long time after Constantine. Emperors might legislate and Bishops might preach, but neither laws nor fulminations were sufficient to bring the Roman people to abandon their favorite pastime. Constantine himself appears to have attended the amphitheatre in 323 and again in 325. It was not until the monk Telemachus in 402, when Honorius was celebrating a victory over Alaric, made his way to Rome and, stepping into the arena, attempted to separate the contesting gladiators, only to be stoned to death by the indignant crowd, that these spectacles were finally ended.

Quite certainly the laws enacted by Constantine, during the years after he became sole ruler of the Empire indicate not only a definite desire to confer special privileges on the Church and its clergy but also make evident his aim to make the Empire a more safe, comfortable and suitable place for the habitation of Christians. The modern student of sociology will find much still to be desired in these laws, just as the student of Christian ethics will find them far from adequate, if he is at all familiar with the tremendous moral evils that were characteristic of society in the Roman Empire at this period. One thing, however, is quite obvious. No longer is there any indication of an attempt to preserve a balance between paganism and Christianity, nor do these laws appear to be the politic measures of an astute and clever statesman. They do not strike at the roots of the evils they seek to eradicate, but they do attempt to provide a larger degree of freedom and of dignity for the individual and to encourage the establishment of moral standards and of a type of living inspired by the Christian religion to the extent that Constantine now had grasped it.

Chapter XVII

THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

We have already had occasion to refer to the legendary account of the conversion and baptism of Constantine as depicted in the frescoes on the walls of the little Chapel of San Silvestro at Rome. It would be quite beside our purpose to attempt to recount the various forms in which this legend has been found or to discover its sources. A vast amount of scholarship and research have already been expended on this subject and the problem is still far from a satisfactory solution. The story that Constantine was baptized by Pope Sylvester seems to have arisen quite early, perhaps because the baptism by Eusebius of Nicomedia seemed incredible because of the Arian associations of the bishop, perhaps because Eusebius later became bishop of Constantinople and thus became confused with his namesake of the other capital, who was Bishop of Rome in 309 or 310. From him the tale would readily be transferred to his successor, Sylvester, for the baptism of Constantine at so early a date would seem improbable.

The story of Constantine's leprosy, which was associated with his baptism, is first known in a Syriac version dating from the middle of the fifth century, but the tradition may be the same as that which was later perpetuated by Cedrenus who stated that he had a red complexion and bloated appearance, which suggested that he had been afflicted with leprosy. A little later these elements are found associated with the tale of the baptism by Pope Sylvester in an Armenian version. The story as depicted in the frescoes at the Santi Quattro Incoronati at

Rome is evidently taken from the *Vita Silvestri* of which the version given by Mombritius is perhaps the oldest, certainly the best known. In this tale there are various episodes not included among those depicted in the frescoes.

In the *Vita Silvestri* the events of the life of St. Sylvester are attributed, in a dedicatory letter, to a collection of *Acta* made by Eusebius of Caesarea, but not included in his *History of the Church*. Sylvester's legendary life prior to his Pontificate is described together with certain events after he became Pope, including his changing of the names of the days of the week to numerals. In versions other than that of Mombritius it is also related that Pope Sylvester liberated Rome from a dragon who had his dwelling under the Tarpeian rock. The actual legend of Constantine also contains various elements not included in the tale as narrated in the frescoes. His quite unhistorical wife Maximiana, who is reported to be the daughter of Diocletian, was the one who instigated the Emperor to persecute the Christians, as a result of which Sylvester sought refuge at Mt. Syraptim, later identified as Mt. Soracte. After his baptism Constantine is said to have commanded the worship of Christ and the building of churches with public funds. The Bishop of Rome, to whom all other bishops are to be subject, must authorize the erection of all new churches. A week after his baptism Constantine begins the building of the basilica of St. Peter, and the following day the church in the Lateran palace. Despite his issuing of edicts commanding the conversion of pagans, the Senate remains pagan. At an assembly summoned by the Emperor at the Ulpian Basilica Constantine urges a general conversion on the basis of his own, but gives assurance that conversion will not be compulsory. Helena, the Emperor's mother, who is living in Bithynia with her grandchildren, on hearing that her son has abandoned paganism, writes to express her approval, but urges that he accept Judaism. On August 13, 315, a disputation takes place at Rome between Pope Sylvester and twelve Jewish rabbis in the presence of Constantine and his mother. The Pope's exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Trinity is evidently framed to exclude the monothelite heresy, which had not yet arisen. The rabbis, by whispering the name of Jehovah into the ear of a bull, cause his instant death, thus exhibiting the power of their religion. The bull is, however, restored to life when Sylvester whispers the name of Christ. The inevitable result is the conversion of Helena and of large numbers of others.

The outlines of this tale evidently reached Rome from the East in the fifth century, but it seems to have gained little credence there. Its general acceptance and its displacement of the historic account of the conversion and baptism of Constantine came by a gradual process, just as the various elaborations and additional episodes slowly found their way into the general scheme of the story. Its origin seems almost certainly to have been in the East; definitely not at Rome. Its basis is found to some extent in the account of Constantine's conversion given by Zosimus, and in other traditions, some of which have now been lost. To the general outline of the leprosy and its cure through baptism other stories, perhaps originally associated with other famous people, became in time attached. This was a very easy process in an age that was without a definite historic sense, in which the pursuit of historic truth was unknown, but which found great delight in tales that were arresting and picturesque. When one remembers how a tale of the Buddha found its way into the *Lives of the Saints,* one should not be surprised that much extraneous material gradually came to be associated with a legend of Constantine. A modern theory that the fresh discovery of legends has brought to light a primal Life of Constantine, emanating, not from the East, but from Roman and Sabine sources, is very interesting, as its establishment would completely exclude the earlier theories regarding the origin of this legendary material. According to this theory Constantine is the new Romulus and that is his own interpretation of his mission. But men do not generally construct the legends about themselves, unless, as in the case of Constantine's Claudian descent, they utilize the services of others for political ends. In the Constantine-Sylvester legend it would appear to be quite clear that we have no such manufactured legend, but one that grew partly from an untrustworthy tradition, partly from misunderstanding and illogical conclusions, to a great extent by accretions from foreign sources, into a composite that found slow and gradual acceptance in an uncritical age.

The historical account of Constantine's baptism continued to be accepted and transmitted by St. Ambrose and St. Jerome. It was adhered to by St. Isidor and Fredegarius in the seventh century, as well as by Herman the Lame of Reichenau and Marianus Scotus in the eleventh century. In the meantime, however, the legendary account became more and more popular in the West from the end of the sixth century onwards until it completely displaced the historic version of the baptism of the Emperor. There were some attempts to reconcile the two irreconcilable versions; but these attempts were doomed to inevitable failure, for the fundamental aim was not the discovery of truth, but the harmonizing of discrepancies, which could only result in ingenious efforts rather than in historical verity. The legend of Constantine and Pope Sylvester even found its way into the Breviary where bits of it are still read in the Second Nocturn for St. Sylvester's day, the last day of December.

Closely associated with this Constantine–Sylvester legend is the famous "Constitutum" of Constantine, which contains the Donation that to so great an extent created the outlook and political history of Europe in the Middle Ages. This "Constitutum" is a lengthy document, replete with repetitions, in which the Emperor, who styles himself "Imperator, Caesar Flavius Constantinus . . . faithful, gentle, most mighty, beneficent, conqueror of the Goths, Sarmatians, Germans, Britons and Huns (although the Huns did not appear in Europe until at least half a century after the date of the alleged donation), pious, fortunate, conqueror and triumpher, ever Augustus," addresses himself to the most holy and blessed Father of Fathers, Sylvester, bishop of Rome and Pope, and to all his successors in the chair of St. Peter to the end of the world, and to all the most reverend Catholic bishops beloved of God in the whole world, who are "by this our imperial decree made subject to the same Holy Roman Church." After a lengthy exposition of the Creed which he has now adopted, the Emperor proceeds to give a circumstantial account of his leprosy, his baptism and miraculous cure, after which he proceeds with the actual donation.

In it he, together with his *satraps* (a title unknown in Rome before the eighth century) and the whole Senate, Nobles and People subject to the Roman Church, have thought it desirable that, even as St. Peter is on earth the appointed Vicar of God, so also the Pontiffs, his vicegerents, "should receive from us and from our empire, power and principality greater than belongs to our earthly empire." So the Pope is to be supreme not only over the sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople (which did not yet exist at the time when the Donation was supposed to have been made) and sovereign of all the priests in the whole world, but in addition "we have bestowed on him the Lateran palace within which we have erected a Church bearing on our own shoulders twelve basketsfull of earth, as well as building and enriching churches for the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and for the maintenance of lights burned in these churches we have bestowed various farm lands and estates in the East as well as in the West, in the North and in the South, that is in Judaea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, Italy, as well as in divers lands." To Sylvester is also granted the diadem or crown as well as the tiara and the imperial necklace, the purple mantle and scarlet tunic and all the imperial trappings, as well as the imperial sceptre and the whole array of imperial dignity and the glory of imperial power. The clergy of the Roman Church are granted senatorial dignity and are to be made patricians and consuls and to be adorned with other imperial honors. This was extraordinarily generous, inasmuch as the historic Constantine by his actual legislation limited the clergy almost exclusively to the humbler classes of society. The Church is to be ministered to by janitors and chamberlains such as wait upon the Emperor, and this despite the fact that a Papal chamberlain is unheard of until the latter part of the eighth century. The clergy of the Roman Church are to ride on horses adorned with saddlecloths and trappings of purest white and, like the Senators, are to wear shoes of white cloth. The Pope is to have the power to enroll whomsoever he will in the ranks of the clergy. He is to wear a diadem like that of the Emperor, but, since he would not consent to use a golden crown beside that of his clerical office, the Emperor has placed on his head a tiara of most dazzling whiteness and has held for him the bridle of his horse, thus performing the duty of a groom from reverence for blessed Peter.

The document finally concludes with the following statement:

"Wherefore, that the pontifical crown may not become cheap, but may be adorned with glory and influence even surpassing the earthly empire, lo! we hand over and relinquish our palace, the city of Rome, and all the provinces, places and cities of Italy and the western regions [this would include Lombardy, Venetia and Istria], to the most blessed Pontiff and universal Pope, our father Sylvester, to his power and that of the bishops that shall succeed him, and we decree by our divine and sacred pragmatic constitution that they shall be governed by him and his successors and grant that they shall remain under the authority of the holy Roman Church.

"Wherefore we have foreseen that it is fitting that our empire and royal power be transferred and changed to the Eastern regions and that in the province of Byzantia (*sic*) in a most excellent place a city bearing our name be built, and our empire be there established, since where the sovereign of priests and head of the Christian religion has been established by the heavenly emperor, it is not fitting that there the earthly emperor should also hold sway."

Solemn injunctions follow this donation, addressed to all future Emperors, nobles, *satraps,* and Senators, bidding them keep this grant inviolate forever and threatening any scoffer, who shall make bold to infringe it, with the opposition of Saints Peter and Paul in this life and the future, and with the certainty to go down and be burned in the lowest hell with the devil and all the impious. The whole is duly attested with the affirmation of the signatures by the Emperor's own hand and the final "protocol" indicating the fact of signature and the benediction, dated in an imaginary consulship that never existed.

When in the middle of the ninth century the False Decretals of the Pseudo-Isador were fabricated and collected, this document was incorporated with them. In the course of time it won acceptance by lawyers and theologians, Popes and chroniclers. Despite its exaltation of the Pope, it was included in the canon law of the Greeks. It is not so strange to find Walther von der Vogelweide, a German remote from Rome, in the thirteenth century lamenting what seemed to him an ill-fated, but none the less genuine, Donation, in words at once forceful and picturesque:

"King Constantine, he gave so much—as I will tell you—to the see of Rome: spear, cross, and crown. At once the angels cried: 'Alas! Alas! Alas! Christendom before stood crowned with righteousness. Now is poison fallen on her, and her honey turned to gall—Woe to the world henceforth!'" It is, however, difficult to understand how, at the beginning of the fourteenth century probably the keenest and best trained mind in western Europe accepted as authentic not only the Donation but apparently the fable that was associated with it as well. Dante laments:

"Ah, Constantine, to how much ill gave birth,
not thy conversion,
but that dower which the first rich father took
from thee!"

Again Dante refers to Constantine as the one who

"with good intention that bore evil fruit,
to give place to the pastor, made himself a Greek."

This legend reached the apex of its development with the appearance of a secondary legend, apparently among the Ghibellines, that when the Donation was made the voice of an angel was heard saying, "Alas! alas! poison has this day been dropped into the Church of God!" This delightful bit, preserved for us by Reginald Pecocke, bishop of Chichester in the fifteenth century, is doubtless referred to by Walther von der Vogelweide when he says: "To-day all the princes live honorably, only their highest one languishes, so works the priests' election. Be that denounced to Thee, sweet God! The priests would upset the rights of the laymen: the prophecy of the angel is true." In Ariosto, however, we find a complete change of outlook:

"He passed a heap of flowers, that erst distilled
Sweet savors, and now noisome odors shed;
The gift (if it may lawfully be said)
Which Constantine to good Sylvester made."

The "Donation" had been regarded as spurious by Otto III, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire at the end of the twelfth century, and by the monks of the Abbey of Farfa in the Sabina at the beginning of that century. Even so high an authority as St. Bernard was quoted against it by Marsiglio of Padua in the early years of the fourteenth century. But it was the fifteenth century that saw it completely discredited at the hands of Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa and Lorenzo Valla. Soon Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), Reginald Pecocke, and Father Jerome Paul, the Catalan, Canon of Barcelona, added their conclusions to complete its annihilation.

One cannot imagine how it was possible for a document so obviously unhistorical to win general acceptance as authoritative. The slightest acquaintance with the history of the fourth century should have made its spuriousness patent. When did the secular power regain the sovereignty over the provinces that had been given to the Pope? What word of protest was ever recorded against this usurpation? What of the barbarous language and the absurd anachronisms?

What was the origin of this strange document, and what was its purpose? The oldest known manuscript is that of the ninth century which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. It appears to have been concocted some time between the middle of the eighth century and the middle of the ninth, for the fabricator makes use of biographies of the Popes contained in the *Liber Pontificalis* as well as of letters of eighth-century popes. There appear to be reflections of decrees of the Iconoclast Synod of Constantinople in 754, as well as of ceremonial which belonged to the eighth century.

The theories that it came from some Roman ecclesiastic of the eighth century, or from the author of the False Decretals, or from a schismatic Greek in the East, have now been completely abandoned as untenable. Rome is no longer regarded by any great number of scholars as the place of its origin, although Hodgkin had an ingenious theory that a clerk in the papal chancery amused his leisure moments by composing in imitation of a style in use at an earlier period, an imaginary edict such as Constantine might have issued immediately after his baptism at Rome, which was then regarded as historic. Such a document, known at the time of its fabrication to be a romance, might, if left about the papal chancery, be found subsequently by one who was anxious to refute the Lombard and convince the Frank. Thus, without intentional act of fraud on the part of any one, the deliberate falsification might come to be accepted as truth. Such a theory, evidently framed to avoid incriminating any person at the papal court, is not convincing. Nearly all modern scholars who have made a careful study of this document are convinced that it emanated from the Frankish dominions in the early years of the ninth century. Those few scholars who still associate its origin with Italy are led to do so merely by the fact that the style in which it is drafted appears to show familiarity with the forms in use in the papal chancery about the year 760. Its Frankish origin would seem far more likely in view of the fact that it first appears in Frankish collections such as the False Decretals and that it is used by Frankish authors as early as the second half of the ninth century. If it did originate in Italy, it is difficult to explain the fact that the early manuscripts that contain it are not Italian manuscripts. Still more perplexing is the fact that a document which was in existence almost certainly before the year 800, cannot be stated with any degree of certainty ever to have been appealed to by any pope in any Bull or letter that has survived before the year 1054, when Pope St. Leo IX, who was himself a German both by birth and by training, quoted it in a letter to the Patriarch Michael Coerularius. It is indeed extraordinary, if this document was fabricated in Italy either at the instigation of the Pope or in the interests of the Holy See, that it should not have seen the light for nearly three centuries. There have been, to be sure, those who have asserted that there is a reference to the "Constitutum" in a letter of Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne written in 778, but practically all modern scholars have now entirely rejected this assumption.

It is now generally agreed that the purpose of this document was to show the justice of the transfer of the Empire of the West to Charlemagne. For centuries after the Emperor at Constantinople had ceased to exercise any definite rule over the West, the Popes had remained loyal to him, fearing and distrusting the Lombards, even when the loyalty to a remote Emperor was most difficult to maintain. The transfer was effected when the Empress Irene had deprived her son of the throne which she seized for herself, and when the Frankish kings had shown outstanding loyalty to the Papacy. Such a document, at the time of the establishment of the Frankish Empire in the West, would appear in the eyes of the Franks to give this transfer of authority still greater claim to legality. Other theories still compete for acceptance. It is asserted that it was an attempt to substantiate his claims made by the Pope to Pepin before the establishment of the Frankish Empire, or that it emanated chiefly from the desire to exalt the honor of Pope Sylvester for whom Pope Paul I had a special veneration.

Other theories that associate the document with Rome see in it an attempt on the part of some Pope to support his claims to secular power in Italy or to unite or enlarge the various sections of Italy under the rule of the Pope. It has been regarded both as an attempt to elevate the Papacy and also as an effort to obtain a more extended secular power.

Amid this welter of conflicting theories it is well to remember that its use by the Papacy did not begin until probably three centuries after the document came into existence; that when it did come into use it was not with the purpose of establishing new claims; and, finally, as has been clearly shown by recent historians who have made the most careful study of the use made of the document, it was rarely appealed to by the Popes down to the middle of the fifteenth century, and when such appeal was made, it was not to enlarge their territorial possessions, but rather to dispose of lands already acquired. It is not without significance that, while the Donation found its way into the canon law of the East, it is not in the canon law of the West, but was later added to it under the title of *Palea*. It has been stated also by some of the most careful students of political history that the Donation exerted no appreciable influence in the ninth century on the relations between Church and State.

The fact that the Donation was incorporated into the False Decretals would seem to require a brief allusion to this famous collection of letters, decrees of councils, and decretals of popes, some of which are genuine; a large part fictitious. The date of this collection is between 845 and 857. There would seem to be little question but that it was produced in France: Rheims and Le Mans have been regarded as the particular place of its origin, but strong arguments have also been adduced in favor of eastern Franconia. It is important to emphasize the fact that the title "Isadorian," which has been at times applied to these decretals, in no way indicates that their author and compiler was St. Isidore of Seville, who had been dead for probably two hundred years when they came into existence.

The purpose of this collection of documents was in only the most remote way associated with the Papacy. It was the product of the corrupt conditions under which the Church in France in the middle of the ninth century suffered under Charlemagne's successors. In the disturbed conditions which resulted from civil wars, the bishops were compelled to seek justice from the civil power, which resulted in false accusations being made against them, while the imperial synods before which they were tried were hopelessly corrupt. A reform party, which attempted to improve conditions by appealing to the ancient canons, held various synods, for there was no hope of any relief through secular legislation. It was evidently either an individual or a group from this reform party that was responsible for the creation of the mysterious document which has caused so much perplexity, by resorting to fiction as, perhaps, the last resort and the lesser of two evils, in the hope of exerting additional pressure on the obstinate nobility, the arrogant metropolitans, and the timorous synods. An interesting attempt has been made to prove that Ebbo, bishop of Rheims, bold, clever, and unscrupulous, who had suffered from the secular arm and still, after years of living in remote Hildesheim, smarted under the outrages of lay interference, was the one who turned his industry and learning to the attempt to win better days for the see he had been obliged to abandon, even at the cost of disregarding the truth.

The question of the authorship of the Decretals will probably never be settled to the satisfaction of all scholars. Certain facts are, however, well established and generally accepted. The Decretals had no appreciable effect on the constitution of the Church. It is the maintenance of the rights of the bishops that is the chief concern; in particular the establishment of the principle that as long as a bishop is deprived of his see, no charges can be brought against him. The supremacy of the Pope is not prominent in a work that is concerned chiefly with the prerogatives of the episcopate. Whatever claims were made for the Papacy in the Decretals were neither new nor unprecedented; they merely asserted what had already been established and did not attempt to institute anything novel. Their influence was negligible so far as concerned the Papacy.

The Constantine who appears in the Donation has travelled a long distance from the historic figure whose conversion came with the victory over Maxentius. He is no longer merely a legendary figure now, but one that has been fictionized and falsified to fit into an entirely new framework. For more than four hundred years this was the Constantine generally known throughout Europe. Had the historic Constantine possessed a small part of the humility of the falsified figure, he might have received more generous treatment at the hands of the historians.

Chapter XVIII

CONSTANTINE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

WHAT HAD Constantine accomplished? A recent study attempts to demonstrate that, although he started on its way the most far-reaching revolution of the ancient world after the turmoil of the late Hellenistic Age, yet he was in no sense an originator, but merely carried through to their logical conclusion policies and measures already initiated by his predecessors. His adoption of Christianity is regarded merely as the reasonable continuation of the policy of tolerance initiated by Galerius and established over a limited part of the Empire by Maxentius. Such a verdict fails utterly to recognize the boldness and originality of the Emperor who not only granted complete religious tolerance but who also identified himself with the hitherto persecuted religion, assumed a definite responsibility in its problems and divisions, and who also clearly regarded himself as having a divinely given mission to safeguard its welfare in all its external relations. The boldness of action involved in his transferring the capital of the Empire to the East is in no way diminished by the fact that some such measure had long been indicated. The Illyrian Emperors had shown a profound sense of the dignity of Rome. The exigencies of frontier protection and the convenience of other cities for purposes of administration had induced them to absent themselves for long periods of time from the ancient capital. Yet no other showed the courage to take the step so revolutionary and so deeply significant for the future of Europe and of the world which Constantine determined upon and put into immediate execution. The originality of his policies in these two outstanding instances should be patent.

In the reform of the government and the army Diocletian had prepared the way for him. His work in these fields was rather that of one who completes a process well under way. It is frequently difficult to distinguish the work of Constantine from that of Diocletian in these very important aspects. We have seen something of the problems that confronted Diocletian at his accession. It remains to consider the vast changes that were effected by the end of Constantine's reign, differentiating his contribution, where it is possible, from that of his predecessor. In many instances, where this distinction can be made clearly and with certainty, it will be obvious that Constantine's measures were more radical and more far-reaching than those of Diocletian. Simplification in the abolishing of excess, and system in the legalizing of customs which had grown up over a period of years, would appear to be the special contribution of Constantine in this process. Although it is difficult to separate the work of the one from that of the other it seems to have been left to Constantine to give a definite character to the legislation and policies in which both he and Diocletian had a share.

When Diocletian became Emperor all thought of that ideal of a balance of power between the Emperor and the Senate, which Augustus wished to give the impression of observing, had long since been abandoned. The "cycle" theory, adumbrated by Plato in the eighth Book of his *Republic,* and elaborated by Polybius and Cicero, had gone through its inexorable course, and the mob rule of the middle of the third century was inevitably succeeded by the despotism of Diocletian. This conception of the imperial office Constantine inherited and adopted. Diocletian, while not claiming to be a god, asserted the patronage of Jupiter for his authority and gave a sacred character to his court and to his rule. A court ceremonial and etiquette, borrowed largely from the Sassanian Kings of Persia, emphasized and made visible the reverence due to the divinely guided monarch. All the outward marks of supernatural authority were not only retained but were still further developed by Constantine in his elaborate and costly garments, as well as in the aloofness which separated him from the ready approach of his subjects.

Not only did the government under Diocletian become frankly autocratic, but a new hierarchy of imperial functionaries and household dignitaries was set up which, although not completed until after the reign of Constantine, still further emphasized the sacredness of the Emperor's person and contributed largely to the unique character of the Byzantine Empire through the long centuries of its existence. During the third century the imperial household, like numerous households of wealthy citizens, had adopted the Oriental custom of choosing eunuchs for the positions of greatest responsibility. After the celebration of his Vicennalia Constantine set up the imperial *cubiculum,* with an eunuch as its head, called the *praepositus sacri cubiculi,* or "Grand Chamberlain," who, in the course of time, came to be one of the highest ranking officials of the State. He was not only in charge of a large number of the servants who made up the retinue of the palace but he also was given the custody of the sacred wardrobe, and was in command of the *primicerius sacri cubiculi,* the personal equerry of the Emperor. Under his direction also were the thirty silentiaries, who, commanded by three *decurions,* constituted the intimate bodyguard of the Emperor, and whose responsibility it was to maintain quiet and order in the Court.

Constantine cast aside the patronage of Hercules and adopted the religion of Christ. He made the most vital department of human life exempt from the interference of the state.

But, in asserting an hereditary claim as the evidence of his right to rule, he adopted the patronage of One Supreme God, Whom he identified at first with *Sol Invictus,* and consistency required him to continue to employ the symbol of the divine Sun long after he had adopted the Christian religion, identifying this symbol (as probably large numbers of his Christian subjects did) with Christ. In compensation for the new liberty granted his subjects, the sacred character of his rule and of his court needed to be more than ever emphasized. He had taken a bold and unprecedented step in granting a new freedom to his subjects. Yet his office must be that of a despot and this had to be made evident by unmistakable outward signs.

The differences between the East and the West had long been evident. Even in the first century it had been necessary to have both a Greek and a Latin Secretary of State. Diocletian had recognized the incompatibility of the two parts of the Empire in his establishment of two Augusti. The military revolutions of the second century made obvious to him the need to break up the great military commands of the past and to subdivide the provinces into smaller fragments. In these smaller provinces the military rule was generally separated from the civil. The commanders of the garrison troops now became *duces* who were of equestrian rank; but, for a time, the separation was not effected in some of the smaller provinces. The Empire was now divided into approximately a hundred and twenty small units. The four great officers of the State were the Praetorian Prefects, one of whom was attached to each Augustus and Caesar and lived with him, wherever his residence might be. When the Praetorians supported Maxentius against Constantine they brought about their own destruction and the Praetorian Prefect became a purely civil officer. The four Praetorian Prefects were now known as those of the Gauls, of Italy, of Illyricum, and of the East. They had supreme command of the forces, under the Emperor, and retained the judicial functions which they had acquired during the preceding century. The Empire was divided by Diocletian into twelve *dioceses,* each comprising a number of provinces and governed by a vicar of equestrian rank with the title of *perfectissimus,* who was the representative of the Praetorian Prefect. Although the vicars were of lower rank than the senatorial governors, all the governors, except the pro-consuls of Africa, Asia and Achaea, were made subject to them. By this innovation men of higher station were made dependent upon officials of lower rank; a principle which ere long made its way through various branches of the administration of the Empire. In this entire complex machinery of government the Emperor was not merely supreme, but was, through his vicars, in immediate contact with all parts of the Empire. The Praetorian Prefects were constantly moved about that they might not acquire too great influence by prolonged stay in one post. The various higher offices that were created had each an honorary title. They were graded as *illustres, spectabiles,* and *clarissimi.* Thus a new nobility was brought into being. Although some governors continued to be drawn from the senatorial order, the Emperor now made all appointments and even the nominal control of the Senate was at an end. The distinction between the senatorial and equestrian ranks disappeared under Constantine. Men from both orders were made provincial governors, and magistrates who had begun their careers as equestrians received senatorial status.

The duties of the Praetorian Prefect embraced everything but the military. His functions were executive, legal and financial, but, so far as concerned the army, he was responsible only for supplying its food, pay, and equipment. He heard appeals from the lower courts, except in the case of the vicar's court, from which appeals went directly to the Emperor, but from the latter part of Constantine's reign, there was ordinarily no appeal from the judgment of the Prefect. The vicar served as the observer for the Prefect, watching those details which it would not be possible for the Prefect, with responsibility for one of the four large divisions of the Empire, to observe. But, since appeals from the vicar were heard directly by the Emperor, the powers of the Prefects were considerably weakened by having subordinate officials whose jurisdiction was parallel with their own. By these new divisions of the Empire and by the creation of new offices, Diocletian had attempted to forestall the powers which the military element had assumed during the preceding century.

By constituting the Praetorian Prefects solely civil administrators, relieved of all military authority, Constantine made them really his vicegerents. The Praetorian Prefect who accompanied Crispus, when he was sent to Gaul as a mere lad with the title of Caesar, was virtually governor of the province. The peril of establishing this precedent must have been apparent, and Constantine, after that time, not only limited the Prefects to civil functions, but also removed them from close attachment to the person of the Emperor. New responsibilities were assigned them such as the imperial post, and the erection of public buildings, as well as the corn supply and the provisioning of the army. They became a most important check on the military commanders and exercised as well an actual authority over the vicars. There might have been a serious danger of concentrating excessive civil authority in the new powers of the Praetorian Prefects, had it not been that the Emperor kept in his own hands both their appointment and their dismissal.

The duties which the Praetorian Prefects had formerly performed were largely taken over by the Sacred Consistory, whose members became permanent, and to which the Praetorian Prefect no longer belonged, his place now being taken by the Quaestor of the Sacred Palace. To him, with the assistance of the *scrinia,* was assigned the responsibility for issuing the imperial edicts and rescripts, as well as for keeping the register of the lesser state officials. From the early days of the Empire there had been three great bureaux known as *ab epistulis, a libellis,* and *a memoria.* The first of these bureaux, which was divided into two sections known as *ab epistulis Latinis* and *ab epistulis Graecis,* was the Secretariat of the Empire, charged with responsibility for all communications which had to do with foreign affairs and the general correspondence of the government. These earlier titles were now retained as part of the title of the chief or *magister* of each department, while the departments had come to be known as *scrinia.* The word *scrinium,* which had originally denoted a box or desk for the keeping of papers, had come to signify a department of the Secretariat, just as the word *fiscus,* which meant originally a basket used to hold coins, had come to be the title of the Emperor's personal treasury. The *scrinium a libellis* was concerned with petitions, legal and otherwise, addressed to the Emperor both by officials and by private persons, and had, at various times, outstanding lawyers associated with it. The *scrinium a memoria* was the Record Office, the "Emperor's memory," which not only recorded documents, but also had an important function in giving their final form to the documents it issued and recorded, as well as to the Emperor's letters, speeches, and many of his formal announcements. A fourth *scrinium,* the *scrinium dispositionum,* later came into existence, which cared for the Emperor's engagements and made the necessary arrangements for his journeys. The *magister* of this *scrinium,* who at first ranked lower than the other *magistri* who were of the class of the *spectabiles,* later became of equal rank with them.

All these *scrinia* were controlled by the *magister officiorum,* a permanent member of the consistory, who held the rank of *comes primi ordinis,* or Count of the first rank. He assumed some of the functions which had formerly belonged to the Praetorian Prefect. The word *officium* is used to signify a group of civil servants under the command of a functionary. The *magister officiorum* was the general master of all such groups. He was a *vir illustris,* and had a wide variety of duties. He had general direction of the provision of arms and, as commander of the mounted bodyguard, the *scholae palatinae,* he was accountable for the safety of the Emperor. He was Minister for Foreign Affairs and master of ceremonies. Most important of his functions was his command of the *schola agentium in rebus,* a newly established body of officials, who acted as dispatch-carriers, supervised the transport of troops, and often collected special donations for the *fiscus.* As *curiosi,* they were the spies who went about the Empire engaged in espionage and returned with reports on both magistrates and subjects.

Ranking next after the *magister officiorum* and the *quaestor sacri Palatii* in the consistory were the two Secretaries of the Treasury, the *comes sacrarum largitionum* and the *comes rerum privatarum,* or Count of the Sacred Largess and Count of the Private Treasury. Their secretaries, who were known as *Palatini,* were also state officials. There were also tribunes and notaries, whose head was called *primicerius,* who acted as secretaries for the consistory, and who were also sent at times as emissaries of the Emperor to the various provinces. Thus we find the consistory as set up by Constantine embodying the full conception of a Ministry or Cabinet such as would survive in most of Europe and in the countries of the West for many centuries down into modern times. Ere long the Grand Chamberlain and the Commanders of the Domestic Guards would have their respective places in this permanent Cabinet, which would thus consist of a Chancellor (the *quaestor* or legal specialist), the Secretaries for the Treasury, both Public and Private, the Secretaries for the Army and the Navy, the Chamberlain, or Secretary for Internal Affairs, and the *Magister Officiorum,* or Secretary of State, who, at times, took over Foreign Affairs. All the members of the Consistory had the rank of *comes,* or companion to the Emperor. Later they would become Counts, just as the *duces* would in the course of time become Dukes.

A vast army of secretaries and minor officials were employed in the elaborate Civil Service instituted by Constantine. The *magister officiorum* had eight departments and a hundred and forty-eight secretaries under him. The requirements for the various offices were carefully specified and the course of promotion was fixed. Such was the bureaucracy which Constantine set up to maintain his absolute power and his control over the officials of both army and State in the remotest parts of the vast Empire. This elaborate system was not only a definite safeguard against the dangers of rebellion in the provinces, but it was destined to be the great guarantee of stability and efficiency in the centuries that followed him, which would enable the Byzantine Empire to survive the frequent incapacity, intrigue and violence within the palace through the vicissitudes of more than a thousand years.

Constantine's reorganization of the army was a further elaboration of the changes already made by Diocletian. Diocletian was concerned primarily with the protection of the frontiers. He increased the number of legions from forty to about sixty and attempted to distribute them through the provinces where they were most needed. These were the border troops. In addition to them he established in place of the disbanded praetorians, who were now reduced to mere garrison duties at

Rome, an elite guard drawn from the legions to follow the Emperor about as his Field Army. Constantine made the Field Army a permanent organization, and early in his reign, separated it into two different organizations known as the *Palatini* and the *Comitatenses*. The border troops, who had been permitted to marry, and who had adopted the customs and to a great extent the languages of the countries in which they had lived for so long, were now relegated to the position of troops of the second grade. They were really provincial troops settled on the borders. The Imperial troops, the *Palatini* and *Comitatenses,* consisting of both infantry and cavalry, together with the pseudo-Comitatenses drawn from the Legions, constituted the Mobile Force which could be sent to the particular points where they were needed. There were also the *auxilia palatina,* troops of light infantry, consisting largely of Gauls with some Germans from beyond the Rhine, which had probably first been organized by Maximian, and were now of great importance; as well as the *scholae,* composed at first entirely of Germans.

The Imperial Guards consisted of the Protectores, soldiers who had already shown distinguished service and were therefore veterans, and the Domestici, consisting of young men of noble families. Senators had been debarred from military service by Gallienus. This policy was abandoned by Constantine and a new body of troops especially designed to admit nobles and sons of Senators to a military career was thus instituted. This organization probably created mere parade troops, however, and lowered the military value of these units. The military officers became *comites* as were the two Ministers of War. Thus there was made a real beginning of a substitution of personal service to the Emperor for service to the State. Although still in the remote future, it heralds the day when vassalage, the relation between man and man, would displace service to the State.

Constantine's military reforms were radical and far-reaching. The frontier troops, reduced in numbers, became little more than local militia, while the Field Army absorbed the best soldiers. In the new army Germans and Illyrians were more highly esteemed than the soldiers from within the Empire. Frontier defenses elaborately developed under Diocletian were continued by Constantine. But it was not due entirely to the decreased population of the Empire and its impoverishment, but largely to a definite policy adopted at this time, that the barbarian soldiers acquired a position of preeminence in the armies of Rome.

Diocletian had had to face the problems presented by financial depression, the decline of urban life, the collapse of industry and commerce, and the consequent decrease of personal liberty and initiative, as the State demanded more and more contributions and personal services. The causes of the decline were of long standing but they had been aggravated by wars and famines, usurpations and pestilences, as well as by greatly increased organization and public expense. The expanded army was also an increased burden. The distribution of free food and amusement was extended to New Rome by Constantine, but it is doubtful if his passion for building exceeded that of Diocletian. Diocletian's attempt to bring stability by establishing a schedule of maximum prices proved a failure, and had to be repealed. His policy of reforming the coinage by exerting absolute control and the minting of reliable coins, both of gold and of silver, was continued by Constantine. Constantine extended the reform to the coins of lesser value and thus succeeded in restoring the Roman monetary system on a basis which endured for centuries in the East. The imperial control of the mints made it possible to issue coins of uniform types which would be available in all parts of the Empire without the expense of transportation. But the closing of the mints in various provinces led both to increased prices and also to the absence of money as a medium of exchange, and the substitution of barter and payment in kind, as a false value was set on relatively worthless coins.

Diocletian's substitution of a tax in kind for a tax in money was an attempt to rectify the conditions that arose from the combination of increased public expenditure with the devaluation of money. The novelty consisted not in the introduction of a tax in kind, for this had been levied by indiction in the past, but in making such a tax a regular institution. A detailed return was needed for the computation of the *iugum* or *caput,* and in these reports, as well as in the fact that the Praetorian Prefect might declare supplementary indictions, while the value of a particular piece of land might greatly vary between the period of two indictions, there was ample opportunity for injustice. While the rich might use bribery to secure preferential treatment, the small farmer who had a limited holding was certain to suffer. The townsmen, who did not possess landed property, came off easily.

Constantine added a tax in money, which the restored currency made possible, and this brought the burden on the Senators and the town-dwellers. It was this gradation of taxes introduced by Constantine that served to bring about a definite stratification of society into classes, which became fixed and permanent. Society became rigid and without vitality. Political and municipal activities had all but disappeared. Dissatisfied with their state in life, men sought to escape from the responsibilities imposed on them in the position in which they found themselves. The poor peasant wanted to flee to the city, while the *decurion* would run away from the municipal senate and the duties it imposed on him. Every grade in society had public duties required of it by the State. Freedom for the individual had disappeared. Only by fixing men in their particular occupation could the State be certain of receiving regularly the required income. Every man must stay at his post. It was a question of preserving society in the form in which it then existed or else of facing chaos. Not only must a man be kept in his present occupation, but his sons must be required to follow in his steps. It was not made absolutely impossible for a man to improve his condition by being promoted to a higher type of service, but it was made exceedingly difficult and severe penalties were prescribed for those who tried to evade the responsibilities of the class in which they found themselves and to take refuge in another occupation. Thus the caste system was fastened on the Empire.

Voluntary associations of those engaged in the same trade or labor became closed guilds in which men had to remain. With the substitution of the tax in kind for money tax, it had been found possible to require free services from certain guilds in substitution for the tax in kind. Thus ship-owners were required to carry fiscal property without charge even though this might involve the refusal of private cargoes and consequent loss. The army and the militia became a caste. Branded at their enlistment, their service was to be permanent and their sons rightfully belonged to the army. The *coloni,* those "perpetual and hereditary, but involuntary farmers for life, for whom attachment to the soil is both a right and an obligation" first become known to us in the time of Constantine. They might not be given public duties, for that would involve taking them away from the land; nor might they enter the ranks of the clergy, except on condition that they continue to live on the land which they cultivated. The landlord might not sell the land without them, nor them without the land, nor might they be shifted about from one estate to another. There is a law of Constantine of October, 332, which provides that "He with whom a *colonus* belonging to another shall be found must not merely restore him to the estate on which the *colonus* was born, but must also pay the capitation for the time (that the *colonus* spent with him). The *coloni* who attempt to run away it shall be lawful to load with chains after the manner of slaves." The serf is bound to the soil, but he possesses the soil and must hand it on to his son. Only in the event of his dying without an heir does it revert to the owner.

The *decurions,* the municipal Senators, suffered more than any other class in the crystallization of society and in the inescapable duties that were attached to their office. The municipal life that had been the great source of unity and strength during the preceding centuries, had been through a long course of decline and had reached the point of collapse. The two consuls, the *duumviri,* who served as magistrates, were responsible for the administration of their particular town and had control of its finances and police. The *aediles* supervised the markets, roads, and buildings, as well as the games and doles, while the *quaestors* were set over the local treasury, and the *pontiffs, augurs, flamens,* and *augustales* were charged with the responsibility for the religious life of the town. These last were destined ere long to disappear under the impact of Christianity. The local Senate or Curia of a hundred members, as magistrates and ex-magistrates, became a small aristocratic order in each *municipium.* They, or their leaders, were made responsible to the imperial government for the payment of the quota of taxation assigned to their district. To hold office as a local magistrate involved the payment of both voluntary and compulsory contributions for local objects. The financial burdens became so crushing that, from the beginning of the fourth century, it became all but impossible to find any one who would assume the responsibilities of a "senatorial" career in the *municipia* throughout the provinces. All previously existing barriers were abolished under Diocletian. Neither illiteracy nor a judicial condemnation, age, or physical disability could excuse one from the obligation to serve in a post which, in the past, men had sought after as a distinguished honor. In 325 the decurionate was not only made compulsory, but the age of eligibility was reduced to eighteen. For a time it was possible to escape its obligations by buying senatorial rank and gaining admission to the Roman Senate, or by entering the army or the ranks of the clergy. Soon all these paths were legally closed, and the *decurion* was required to continue to shoulder the financial burdens which had already ruined him.

In the meantime, despite the establishment of a highly centralized government and the strengthening of the army, it seemed impossible to attain good government. The Emperor had set up, in his consistory, a Privy Council which seems also to have been a High Court of Justice. He had built up the various departments of administration to secure greater efficiency. But the multiplication of functionaries seemed to lead only to corruption and oppression. Proximity to the Emperor was the one guarantee of exemption, not only from the severe fiscal demands, but even from the rigid execution of justice. The criminal laws more and more made evident a serious discrimination between the *honestiores,* the "more honorable," and the *humiliores,* the "more lowly." Yet the barbarians, settled on the lands of the Empire as *laeti* or *inquilini,* were not subject to the same restrictions and burdens. Free from the restrictions of the caste system, they had the opportunity to rise.

Rome, shorn of all its dignity and prestige, still continued to have the external organization of the days of its greatness. The Senate, limited to purely municipal functions, was concerned chiefly with the bread and circuses which must still be provided for the fickle mob. There were still two Consuls, but their posts were purely honorary. The one officer possessed of power and authority was the City Prefect, the head of the Senate, who was not only responsible for the provisioning of the city, but who also exercised control over every department of business. But the absence of the Emperor and the loss of all authority in the Senate was certain ere long to bring into greater prominence the great central spiritual authority of the Pope. A little more than two hundred years later an Urban Prefect, after discharging the responsibilities of his office in a time of great peril and suffering, would become Supreme Pontiff. The city of Augustus would become the city of Peter. The New Rome reproduced the Senate and magistracies of Old Rome, although it did not have an Urban Prefect until 359. All authority, however, was concentrated in the hands of the Emperor and his Consistory, working through the elaborate organization of the bureaucratic Civil Service. Every vestige of republican sentiment now abandoned, the Emperor the sole source of law, Caesar's city was established to endure. The Empire declined, but it did not fall. There was no break in its continuity, but, not merely in its geographic center, but to a far greater extent in its inner spirit and its essential life, was it remote indeed from the Empire of Augustus.

Constantine has been accused of harshness and cruelty in his legislation, particularly in the punishments meted out for various offences. It has been said that he "multiplied the number of punishments by the stake; he condemned to that punishment the Jew who cast stones at the Christian Jew; the tax-collector who abused his office; the scribe who wrongly placed a name on the list of those granted immunity; the slave who mated with a free woman; the accomplices in rape; the forger; those who held communications with barbarians;

the creditor who seized for debt the oxen and agricultural implements of the debtor, etc. He caused molten lead to be poured into the mouth of the maid-servant who helped in the abduction of a girl, while the workman who spoiled a fabric could be put to death." All this is quite true; yet it must not be forgotten that the very severity of these penalties is evidence that the Emperor was determined to reform a thoroughly corrupt society, even though it involved the use of measures that seem to a later age cruel and barbarous. He was working against the background of a society steeped in vice and inured to cruelty. Paganism had done but little to elevate moral standards or to soften the inherent indifference to suffering of the masses of people who made up the subjects of the Empire. Philosophy had produced lofty thoughts in the minds of the few and had disposed them to mercy and sympathy, but vast numbers of people throughout the Empire, save where they had been reached by Christian teaching, had been given little to mitigate the ferocity of temper that found its chief delight in the cruel games of the amphitheatre. Maximian, Galerius, Severus, Maximin Daia, and Licinius had all been typical of the vices and inhumanity of the age. Constantine attempted by legislation to regenerate a corrupt and vicious society, which had fallen far from the noblest standards of the past. He saw no way to make his measures effective, save through imposing penalties that seem unduly harsh. It did not occur to him, nor, so far as we know, to any of his contemporaries, to seek the causes of the evils he sought to eradicate.

He did, as we have seen, espouse the cause of the weak and defenseless members of society. Although appeals from the normal judges to himself were discountenanced, yet widows and orphans were allowed to bring accusation against judges suspected of partiality. Judges guilty of neglect or bad faith must make good from their private wealth the damages they had caused. Persons accused in civil cases might not be detained in prison indefinitely. Poor children were a special care to the Emperor. When estates were divided, it was not lawful to separate the children of *coloni* from their parents or brothers from one another; nor might landlords increase the dues of *coloni*. There were thirty-seven different guilds of artisans and traders that were granted special privileges which were aimed to encourage them to improve both themselves and their children in their particular craft or trade. The Emperor, who inflicted such severe penalties on criminals, was evidently concerned with improving the lot of the oppressed and desirous of protecting those who might easily become the victims of injustice.

Constantine was successful in making secure the frontiers and in averting both civil war and foreign invasion. The admission of barbarians, however, both to the army and to lands within the Empire, could not fail to work an injustice on his own subjects and eventually to lead to the complete barbarization both of the army and of the provinces. Yet these results were not apparent to him. He did not succeed in making life comfortable for the vast numbers of people in the Empire, nor in bringing them happiness. Yet it is doubtful if any of his contemporaries could have devised or discovered the measures that were capable of producing happiness and contentment amid the conditions that then existed in the Empire. He lavished benefactions on the Church, particularly in the erection of church buildings. It is, however, open to serious doubt whether the building of churches by monarchs in the past or by millionaire capitalists and employers in the modern world, renders a really great service to the Church. It is still more doubtful if the Church is well served when the means required for these benefactions must be derived from a grinding taxation or from a ruinous monopoly or from the withholding of adequate wages from the employed. The Church profits most when the buildings to house her worship and the gifts to make that worship dignified and seemly come from the voluntary labors and sacrifices of large numbers of her children, rather than from the munificence of the rich. In addition to his activity in building churches, Constantine rendered a distinct service to the Church in the fifty copies of the Holy Scriptures which he commissioned Eusebius of Caesarea to have prepared with the utmost care. It is interesting to remember that, when the Renaissance in Western Europe focused its interest on the Letters and Learning of the Hellenic past, it found its inspiration, as well as the material it sought, preserved for its use at Constantine's capital. So too the Protestant reformers turned to the East and found the Greek Testament which had been treasured at New Rome, as the instrument which they sought to use in their revolt against the Catholic Church in the West.

Constantine had built up a strong government that was destined to endure, but its dominant features were centralization, bureaucracy, and Orientalism. These were the very elements that were certain to produce intrigue as well as plots and crimes within the palace. In his attempt to solve the economic problems of the Empire he had brought about a rigidity which led inevitably to the imposing of a caste system which utterly deprived the subjects of the Empire of ambition and initiative, while the barbarians were left free to rise in wealth and in station. In the favor that he showed to both the army and the officers of State, he brought into existence a new nobility bound by ties of personal loyalty to the Emperor, but not to the Empire. With the arrival of serfdom, vassalage, closed hereditary guilds, and hereditary absolute monarchy, a new age had dawned.

Chapter XIX

THE REAL CONSTANTINE

Constantine emerges from the records that have survived, and particularly from his edicts, laws, and letters, as a real person; brave, unwearying in his constant and strenuous activity, but at the same time exceedingly human in his ambition, his sensitiveness, his vanity. Patient and long-suffering for considerable periods of time, yet passionate and capable of harsh measures when unduly roused, he manifests the inconsistencies common to most men; yet there is a tenacity of purpose and an intransigent loyalty to principles and policies that unify his character and give a harmony to the whole, even though it may appear lacking when individual events are considered in isolation.

Any just estimate of Constantine's character demands that it be considered against the background of the age in which he lived, and in relation to his contemporaries, and above all else, in contrast with the traits so conspicuous in those with whom he was associated in the rule of the Roman Empire. Contemporary evidence is not lacking with regard to the vices, cruelty, and excesses of Maximian, Galerius, Maxentius, Severus, Maximin Daia, and Licinius. In this respect the pagan writers are nearly as outspoken as those who have been accused of having a Christian bias. Yet, because Constantine espoused the cause of the Christians and regarded himself as one with them, quite different standards have been invoked in appraising his character from those that are regarded as just in forming the estimate of his associates. Modern students have been particularly prone to injustice towards Constantine when comparing him with Diocletian. The contemporary evidence with regard to Diocletian that has survived, particularly so far as concerns his character, is negligible. It has already been indicated that it would be quite possible, on the basis of the questionable evidence that we have, to assume that Diocletian not only made his way to the imperial throne by a series of murders, but also that he was fully cognizant of the purpose of Aper to assassinate Numerian, that he gave his ready acquiescence, while all the time planning later to denounce him and to turn Aper's act to his own advantage. One would hesitate, with the uncertain evidence that is available, to assert that this is a true account of what actually happened. Yet, on evidence equally as uncertain, it is quite usual to condemn Constantine.

There have been two outstanding reasons for the harsh judgment that has been pronounced on the character of Constantine by his modern critics. The fulsome praises of Eusebius have every outward appearance of disingenuousness. The fate of Crispus and of Fausta during the year that followed the Emperor's prominent participation in the Council of Nicaea and the striking contrast between these events and his benevolent words and acts on that occasion, have branded him as a hypocrite as well as a murderer in the eyes of numerous scholars in later times. Yet there would seem to be some significance in the fact that none of his contemporary pagan critics really accuse him of hypocrisy. Certainly Eusebius has done him a serious disservice both in his excessive idealizing of Constantine's character, and in his omission of all reference to the deaths of Crispus and Fausta. Yet the mention of these deaths would have been inconsistent with Eusebius' avowed purpose in writing his treatise on Constantine. There is the further possibility that Constantine, who told the Bishop of Caesarea his intimate experiences with regard to the vision of the Cross, may have also revealed to him the actual circumstances of these two executions, which entirely exonerated the Emperor in the eyes of the bishop. His silence then might be due either to a desire to spare Constantine's feelings, or to refrain from perpetuating the shame that would inevitably be attached to the name of the Empress. These are only possible explanations of the reticence of Eusebius. One would hesitate to assert them as facts.

It would appear quite evident, from the biased testimony that has come to us, that the fair name of Fausta was defiled in the eyes of her contemporaries. It would seem more than likely that the Emperor, so clever and swift in decision, yet somewhat unsophisticated and easily preyed upon by unscrupulous favorites; so energetic both in body and mind, yet peculiarly susceptible to the atmosphere by which he was surrounded; after the many fatigues of military activity and the disillusionment that came from his contacts with the Donatists and the Arians, was beset by intrigue, suspicions, reports of disloyalty and disaffection. In this situation it would not be strange if he were to fall a victim to melancholia or to a temporary mental aberration. This has been a not infrequent malady among despotic monarchs, who had exhausted their mental and physical resources in establishing their authority, and who then encountered fresh anxieties and problems as overwhelming as unexpected. In such a state Constantine is quite likely to have been the victim of self-seeking and plausible advisers, whose counsel he would not have followed had he been sound of mind and body at the time. The crimes of Crispus and of Fausta may have been real or fabricated by those who had their own ends to consider. They may have been trivial or profoundly serious. A man of the temperament that we know to have been Constantine's was capable of exemplary patience and forbearance, but when a particularly sensitive nerve was lacerated the same man had an equal capacity for sudden wrath and drastic action.

It is, however, entirely discordant with his whole character and disposition, as shown on innumerable occasions and in various relationships, that his devotion to those nearest to him, which we know to have been very deep, should have been obliterated and superseded by insensate and vindictive cruelty, had there not been some adequate cause. Crispus was probably guilty of treasonable ambition; Fausta was almost certainly insanely ambitious and jealous, unfaithful to her husband, and involved in base intrigue. The real reason for the death sentence in both cases, however, was almost certainly the temporarily disordered mind of the Emperor. He lived in a society in which penalties for crimes far less serious than theirs appear to have been were invariably severe. Neither truth nor justice can be served by any attempt to claim complete innocence for Constantine. It is exceedingly doubtful, however, if like acts would have elicited the same condemnation for any of his contemporaries. Since the days of Gibbon superfluous tears have been shed over the sad fate of the young Licinius. He was probably twenty years of age when he perished. He was the son of a slave woman, not the nephew of Constantine; it is all but certain that he would not have been put to death, after being permitted to live for so many years, unless he had been proved to be involved, or at least made to appear as implicated, in a definite plot aiming at usurpation.

The defamation of the character of Constantine really began with his nephew Julian, who abandoned the Christian religion and initiated the abortive attempt to restore paganism as the religion of the Empire. Julian's memories were stored with unhappy pictures of his cousins, the sons of Constantine. He associated the Christians whom he knew with bloodshed, craftiness, and injustice. He was but six years of age when Constantine died, and could not have had any personal knowledge of him. The massacre of his father, eldest brother, and cousins, had left an indelible impression on his embittered childhood. It would be idle to look for just treatment of the memory of the father of Constantius whom he regarded with well-deserved contempt.

Julian was the author of a skit, which he entitled "The Caesars," in which he introduces the various emperors who had preceded him into the presence of the Olympian deities. This provides him with the opportunity to describe his uncle, Constantine, at the first mention of his name, as "a man not unwarlike but a slave to pleasure and enjoyment." The gods are represented as sitting in solemn assembly and the deified emperors enter to join their group, and each to speak in his own behalf. They find their places each behind the particular god whom he most resembles. In the case of Constantine, there is no god who qualifies as his model, and no god who is desirous of claiming him. At length he embraces the goddess of Luxury or Pleasure, who receives him tenderly, embraces him, and then, after dressing him in raiment of many colors and otherwise making him beautiful, leads him to Incontinence. There the blasphemous Julian makes him encounter Christ, Who is represented as crying out to all comers: "He that is a seducer, he that is a murderer, he that is sacrilegious and infamous, let him approach without fear! For with this water I will wash him and will straightway make him clean. And though he should be guilty of those same sins a second time, let him but smite his breast and beat his head and I will make him clean again."

This is Julian's version of Constantine's conversion and of the motive that prompted it.

When Constantine attempts to speak in his own behalf, he is described as beginning with sufficient confidence, but, when he reflects on the exploits of others, he realizes that his own achievements are quite trivial. He had defeated tyrants, to be sure (Maxentius and Licinius), but one of them was untrained in war and effeminate, while the other was a poor creature, enfeebled by old age, and both alike were odious to gods and to men. His campaigns against the barbarians covered him with ridicule. He paid them tribute, so to speak, while really giving his attention to the goddess of Pleasure or Luxury, who stood at a distance from the gods, near the entrance to the moon. In fact he was so enamored of her that he had no eyes for anything else, and cared not at all for victory. In his defence he claims to be superior to all others; to the Macedonians, since he had fought against Romans, Germans, and Scythians, rather than against Asiatic barbarians; to Caesar and Octavian, since he did not lead a revolution, as they did, against brave and good citizens; but instead attacked only the most cruel and wicked tyrants. He quite naturally ranks himself far above Trajan because of those glorious exploits against tyrants; still more does he feel that he should be regarded as at least Trajan's equal for recovering the territory which Trajan had added to the Empire. Indeed is it not really more glorious to regain what you have lost than merely to gain it in the first instance? Marcus Aurelius may be regarded as admitting his inferiority by the very silence he maintains.

When asked by Silenus if he was not offering mere gardens of Adonis as exploits, Constantine asks in reply: "What do you mean by gardens of Adonis?" "I mean," responds Silenus, "those that women plant in pots, in honor of the lover of Aphrodite, by scraping together a little earth for a garden bed. They bloom for a short time and immediately fade." At this Constantine can only blush, for he realizes full well that this is exactly like his own performance.

Hermes is described as asking Constantine, "And what was the height of your ambition?" "To amass great wealth," Constantine replies, "and then to spend it liberally so as to gratify my own desires and the desires of my friends." At this Silenus, the buffoon and toper of Olympus, bursts into raucous laughter and says, "If it was a banker you wanted to be, how was it that you so far forgot yourself as to lead the life of a pastry-cook and hairdresser? Your locks and your fair face betokened this all the time, but what you say about your motives convicts you."

The punishment of Constantine and his sons at the hands of the avenging deities, for their impiety and for the shedding of the blood of their kindred, is continued until Zeus finally grants them a respite for the sake of Claudius Gothicus and Constantius Chlorus.

This whole narrative is obviously conceived in the spirit of mockery and it may be doubted if it is a serious attempt to state the case against the character of Constantine. In his Oration in honor of Constantius, Julian testified to the military genius and achievements of his uncle; his suppression of tyrants, the reverence he inspired in his soldiers, the affection of his subjects. He even bears witness to the virtue which Constantius inherited from his father and to the harmony that existed in Constantine's marriage with Fausta. Here Julian is obviously saying the correct things on a state occasion, and is not averse to giving praise with his lips while his heart is filled with rancor. It is exceedingly unlikely that, when he found the opportunity to speak without restraint, he failed to indulge in exaggeration to compensate for the insincerity of his correct and formal statements during the lifetime of Constantius. In view of his own personal experience, of his hatred for the Christian religion, and of the general tone of raillery and persiflage that characterized his Saturnian Symposium, it would be unwise to take too seriously any of the accusations against the character of Constantine which are contained in it. It is true that Julian relates also, in his Oration to the Cynic Heracleion, an anonymous tale of a man who had inherited some wealth from his father. Because of his determination to enrich himself by fair means or foul, and his disregard for the gods, it multiplied greatly. He had several wives and sons and daughters among whom he divided his vast wealth before his death. Yet, since he gave them no instruction in the management of their property, in how to increase it or to recover any of it that they might lose—for he relied on their numbers as sufficient to preserve it—their inheritance was the cause of selfish ambition and discord among them. He had failed to teach them what was needful, for his own gains had been due rather to luck and a happy faculty for gain, than to any real knowledge of rational principles. Moreover he had not attempted to make his sons virtuous, or to teach them reverence for the gods. The result was that they attacked one another; their relatives equally ignorant became involved; a general slaughter followed. The sons destroyed the ancestral temples which their father had despised, and erected sepulchres (by which he evidently means Christian churches, which were frequently built over the tombs of martyrs) not only on new sites, but even on the places where temples had once stood, thus bearing witness to the fact that they would themselves, ere long, because of their neglect of the gods, have need of many such sepulchres.

Of the identity of the characters in this fable there can be no possible doubt. Julian is giving free expression to his detestation of Constantius and of the Christian religion. It is his own version of the general massacre that followed the death of Constantine and it provides him with an opportunity to ascribe the rivalry between Constantine's sons to the vicious influence of their father, and to the religion of his adoption. It is of little value in any attempt to arrive at a just estimate of the character of his uncle. The parody on the Caesars does, however, provide definite evidence of the origin of the legend of Constantine's baptism as the direct result of his crimes, which was later set forth by Zosimus, and thus indicates an element of pagan propaganda which later became active in contributing material for the development of the legend of the Emperor's baptism at Rome by Pope Sylvester in order to effect the cure of his leprosy.

It also contains definite charges of luxury, extravagance, self-indulgence, and unchastity which demand consideration. It would not be strange if, after a life of strenuous military activity, in the atmosphere of a court in which Oriental splendor and magnificence held sway, the Emperor were to decline to a degree of self-indulgence unknown in his earlier years. Yet his constant activity, his long journeys, the vast amount of thought involved in the laws that were enacted for the benefit of depressed and defenceless classes in society, as well as financial, military, and administrative problems, make it exceedingly unlikely that Constantine could have become soft and to any marked degree relaxed and weakened in moral fibre. Even Julian had said in his Oration in honor of Constantius that Constantine was far more humane and in very many other respects superior to others. If it is to be proved that he lost his self-control and gave way to unchastity, not only must we reject the testimony of the panegyrists who, themselves pagans, would omit the mention of virtues that were obviously lacking; but also the marked contrast between the characterization of his associates given by pagan writers who describe them as licentious and notoriously unchaste, while making no such charges against Constantine. If the testimony of Lactantius and of Eusebius is to be accorded any consideration whatever, these charges are preposterous; but, since their evidence is generally regarded as blindly prejudiced, it would seem best to give it no weight. The excessive vehemence of Constantine's legislation against adultery and rape indicates the righteous severity of the reformer. Against these offences his wrath is inexorable. He seems determined to purge society of outrages to morality such as these. It is, of course, conceivable that Constantine may have been the most consummate of arch-hypocrites, but such a verdict would do violence to the general impression of his character received from all other sources, as well as to his contemporary reputation for extraordinary continence. Attempts to prove marital irregularities in Constantine are quite unconvincing. The standards of contemporary society were low, and relations not tolerated by Christian ethical principles met with no condemnation. Is it conceivable that Constantine, while not measuring up to Christian standards in this regard, may have been so far superior to the vast body of his contemporaries, and in particular the Caesars whom he supplanted in authority, as to have appeared a paragon of virtue to his contemporaries, while actually falling far short of the ideal of Christian chastity? It is unlikely, in this event, that he would have devoted such energy and ardor to the extirpation of vices to which he himself occasionally yielded. However incomplete his grasp of the Christian religion may have been, it is quite clear that he did fully grasp the significance of Christian moral teaching in this regard, and that he strove consistently to observe it.

It has been well said that we may safely recognize as true any vices attributed to Constantine by the contemporary Christian writers, while any virtues in him admitted by the pagans, he is quite likely to have possessed. His ardent admirer Eusebius does seem to bear witness to two lamentable weaknesses in his hero. He relates that Constantine provoked derision because his easy-going nature and uniform inclination to clemency allowed crimes to go unpunished; and that the general administration of the Empire was blamed because of the laxity that he permitted or encouraged in provincial governors. On numerous occasions Constantine was not a good judge of the character of those who surrounded him. He was easily duped and deceived by unscrupulous favorites. In his attempts to show mercy, he was doubtless often hoodwinked by ambitious and self-seeking politicians and prelates. On these occasions his firmness of purpose became weakened, and he succumbed to the suggestions of courtiers. Probably to this class belonged Optatus and Ablabius, who appear to have advanced the interests of the line of Constantine's younger brothers and to have induced Constantine to make generous provision for Delmatius and Hannibalianus. Their inclusion in the general massacre that followed Constantine's death is good evidence of such activities.

Another passage from Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* deserves to be quoted. After speaking of Constantine's mental gifts and of his kindly disposition which often brought upon him censure from many people because they attributed their own crimes to his forbearance, he continues: "Indeed I can myself bear testimony to the grievous evils which prevailed during these times; I mean the violence of rapacious and unprincipled men, who preyed upon all classes of society alike, and the scandalous hypocrisy of those who crept into the Church and assumed the name and character of Christians. His own benevolence and goodness of heart, the genuineness of his own faith, and his truthfulness of character, induced the Emperor to credit the profession of those reputed Christians, who craftily preserved the semblance of sincere affection for his person. The confidence he reposed in such men sometimes forced him into conduct unworthy of himself, of which envy took advantage to cloud in this respect the luster of his character."

It is quite certain that there was a definite deterioration in the lives of both clergy and laity during the latter part of the fourth century, directly traceable to the imperial favor which made Christianity the popular and fashionable religion among those who would court favor with Constantine. We do not need the testimony of the pagan Ammianus Marcellinus to inform us of the vices that were prevalent among both the clergy and the laity in the period that followed the death of Constantine. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Chrysostom abound in examples of them. So rich had some of the clergy grown, through gifts bestowed on them by pious women, that in 370 there was issued an edict which forbade the clergy to visit the houses of widows or wards, of which St. Jerome wrote, "I do not complain of the law, but of the causes that rendered it necessary." The Church suffered; the administration of justice was vitiated by laxity and special privilege; disorder and discontent arose through the activities of factions and favorites. The good name of the Emperor was aspersed because of the unscrupulous men by whom he was surrounded. He was the victim of his own excessive good nature. Such is the impression we derive from the words of Eusebius, and there is no passage in the whole of his eulogy of Constantine that seems more unaffected and more free from all exaggeration and dissimulation, more utterly candid and artless than this in which he treats of the evils that arose during the reign of the Emperor he so greatly admired. Yet from this passage we receive an impression of Constantine that is quite appealing in its revelation of a fault that is due to an excess of kindliness and humanity rather than to severity, avarice or selfishness.

Eusebius makes still another statement which might be regarded as derogatory to the character of Constantine, when he reports that the Emperor "divided the whole extent of his dominions, as though he were allotting a patrimonial inheritance." Yet it would be difficult to imagine the sovereign who had attained through many years of struggle the absolute rule of the entire Roman Empire not disposing of it as seemed best to him. If filial affection induced the lofty philosopher Marcus Aurelius to commit the Empire to one of the most unworthy rulers ever to wield authority in it, it should not be difficult to condone the provision made for his sons by Constantine, if indeed the report recorded by Eusebius be trustworthy.

When we turn to the other Christian writers we find little in condemnation of Constantine. Theodoret, who was devoted to the cause of Athanasius, does attempt to explain why Constantine had sent so many great men into exile by comparing him to David, who was deceived, not by a priest, but by a slave and a rascal.

When we turn to the pagan writers, Zosimus represents the tradition most hostile to Constantine. It must, of course, be remembered that he wrote a full century or more after the death of Constantine and was outstanding among the protagonists of a dying paganism. He has so frequently been proved untrustworthy as well as biased, that his words are only what we should expect to read regarding the character of the Emperor whom he hated with a virulence hardly surpassed by that of Julian. This is his account of the Emperor's vices:

"Now that the whole empire had fallen into the hands of Constantine, he no longer concealed his evil dispositions and vicious inclinations, but acted as he pleased, without control. He practised the ancient religion of his country, though not so much out of honor or veneration as of necessity. Therefore he believed the soothsayers, who were expert in their art, as men who foretold the truth with regard to all the great actions that he ever performed. But when he came to Rome he was filled with pride and arrogance . . . and on the occasion of a particular festival when the whole army was to go up to the Capitol, he reproached the ceremony most indecently, and, treading the holy ceremonies, as it were, under his feet, he incurred the hatred of the Senate and people.

"Unable to endure the curses of almost the whole city, he sought for another city as large as Rome, where he might build himself a palace. . . . When he was delivered from the distractions of war, he yielded himself up to voluptuousness and distributed to the people of Byzantium a present of corn which is continued to this day. As he expended the public treasure in unnecessary and unprofitable buildings, he also built some which, in a short time, were taken down, because, being erected hastily, they could not long stand . . . he continued to waste the revenues of the Empire in useless expenses, and in presents to mean and worthless persons, but oppressed those who paid the tributes, and enriched those who were useless to the state. For he mistook prodigality for magnificence. He also laid a tax of gold and silver on all merchants and tradesmen, even the lowest classes, nor did he even spare the lowest prostitute. Thus on the return of every fourth year when the tax was to be paid, nothing could be heard through the whole city but lamentations and complaints. When the time arrived, nothing but whips and tortures were provided for those who, because of their extreme poverty, could not pay the money. Mothers were even forced to part with their children, and fathers to prostitute their daughters for money to satisfy these exactions. . . . With these exactions he exhausted all the towns, for they continued in force so long even after the time of Constantine, that the cities were completely drained of money, and many of them forsaken by their inhabitants.

"After Constantine had oppressed and tormented the people in these various ways, he died of a disease and was succeeded by his three sons, who were not born of Fausta, the daughter of Maximian Herculius, but of another woman, whom he had put to death for adultery."

Zosimus, who never failed to assign a vicious motive for every achievement of Constantine, and constantly accuses him of breaking faith and disregarding his pledged word, here speaks primarily as the aggrieved pagan whose religion has been slighted and is now rapidly vanishing. It is probably true that Constantine did continue, after his conversion, to resort to augury on certain occasions, for his native superstition still found vent in at least this ancient pagan practice, yet it was beyond question the triumph of Christianity within him that induced him to brave the resentment of the populace of pagan Rome on the occasion of the Ides of Quintilis.

The charges of extravagance made against Constantine by Zosimus had, no doubt, ample justification. Yet Diocletian was a far more serious offender in this regard than he. At Rome, which Diocletian visited but once, he repaired the theatre of Pompey and rebuilt the Senate-house, which had been damaged by fire. Temples were renovated and, most sumptuous of all, the enormous baths and library, a part of the remains of which is now occupied by the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, were erected. At Nicomedia he built palaces for his wife and his daughter, as well as basilicas and a circus. At Milan a palace was erected and Carthage, as well, was adorned by his generosity. Triumphal arches were set up in various parts of the Empire. The crowning example of his magnificent works, however, is the palace in Dalmatia which he had constructed for the days of his retirement. Constantine, however, bestowed his lavish munificence largely on the erection of churches. No expenditure of public funds could be more offensive to Zosimus than this. The reference to gifts to mean and worthless persons is beyond question the irritated Zosimus' protest against the Emperor's benefactions to the bishops of the Church. These Zosimus naturally resented most keenly.

The sufferings incident to the collection of taxes should justly be charged to the exigencies of the times, to Diocletian, and especially to the collectors, whose harsh measures in remote places were beyond control. The work of Zosimus is of little historical value. It is to a great extent an inferior compilation from Eunapius and Olympiodorus. The bitter prejudice that is evident in his treatment of Constantine invalidates the work as a witness to the Emperor's character. The attempt made by Evagrius to refute some of the statements regarding Constantine is weak and not convincing. Yet Zosimus' utter detestation of Constantine is so patent as to render him quite without value in all that concerns the Emperor's traits or his motives. The fable at the end of the passage which we have quoted from Zosimus is of itself sufficient evidence that the author either has depended upon an entirely untrustworthy source, or else that he has employed his meager gifts of invention to produce a libel quite without support from other sources.

When we turn to Eutropius we read, in quite a different vein:

"He was a man who, in the beginning of his reign, might have been compared with the best princes; in the latter part of it, only to those of middling character. Innumerable good qualities of body and mind were apparent in him. He was exceedingly ambitious of military glory, and he had great success in his wars, a success, however, not more than proportioned to his exertions. After he had brought to an end the civil war, he also overthrew the Goths on various occasions, granting them at last peace, and leaving on the minds of the barbarians a strong remembrance of his kindness. He was attached to the arts of peace and liberal studies, and was ambitious of honorable popularity, which indeed he sought by every kind of liberality and obligingness. Though he was slow, from suspicion, to serve some of his friends, yet he was exceedingly generous towards others, neglecting no opportunity to add to their riches and honors.

"He enacted many laws: some good and equitable, but most of them superfluous, and some severe; and was the first to attempt to elevate the city which bore his name to such a point as to make it a rival of Rome. . . . He was deservedly enrolled among the gods."

One can readily understand that to even an unprejudiced pagan Constantine would inevitably appear to deteriorate after he abandoned the ancient religion of Rome, while to such a one his laws in favor of the religion of his adoption could not appear other than superfluous. Aurelius Victor evidently is quoting a saying common in pagan circles in a later age, when he describes Constantine as "bull-necked in the first *decade* of his reign, during the next a thief, and in the final ten years a spendthrift heir." It was but natural that in the pagan tradition all expenditures that favored the Christians should be reviled. Aurelius Victor also calls him a "scoffer." In this assertion he is probably referring to the Emperor's sarcastic pleasantries, rather than to his attitude towards religion, although, of course, it may reflect the judgment of those to whom his conversion to Christianity was an act of apostasy. Yet Aurelius Victor also says that he was in many respects most excellent.

One more passage from a pagan author may be quoted as manifesting a spirit of fairness unknown to Zosimus and his school and indicative of the tradition that must have existed among a considerable number of pagans who were not so blinded by prejudice as to be incapable of recognizing merit where it existed. Praxagoras of Athens, as quoted by Photius, says: "In all sorts of virtue and personal excellence and good fortune Constantine outshone all the Emperors who preceded him."

Eusebius concluded his tribute in the *Life of Constantine* with these words:

"Standing as he did, alone and preeminent among the

Roman Emperors as a worshiper of God; alone as the bold proclaimer to all men of the doctrine of Christ; having alone rendered honor, as none before him had ever done, to His Church; having alone abolished utterly the error of polytheism, and discountenanced idolatry in every form: so, alone among them both during life and after death, was he accounted worthy of such honors as none can say have been attained to by any other; so that no one, whether Greek or barbarian, nay of the ancient Romans themselves, has ever been presented to us as worthy of comparison with him."

Such words would seem to have been the provocation that induced Julian to launch forth in the ferocious diatribes of his lampoon.

Probably the most sound and careful of the long line of Byzantine historians, Theophanes, who asserts that he has diligently examined a large number of works and that he reports nothing on his own authority, sums up the character of Constantine in these words:

"Preeminent for masculine strength of character, penetration of mind, well-disciplined power of thought; for unbending righteousness, ready benevolence, thoroughly majestic beauty of countenance, mighty and successful in war, great in his contests with the barbarians, invincible in domestic conflicts, and so firm and unshaken in faith that through prayer he obtained the victory in all his battles."

What conclusions are we to draw from the certain and uncontroverted facts of Constantine's life in the face of this mass of conflicting testimony? Constantine was of rough and uncultivated origin. The legend of his father's descent from Claudius Gothicus was evidently propaganda rather than fact. His father came from one of the great families in the Balkans, and has been described by a recent writer as outstanding for his "pro-bourgeois and pro-Christian sympathies." He was without question considerate and humane and possessed of a graciousness that endeared him both to his soldiers and to the subjects in his provinces. He was of rough and sturdy stock accustomed to a crude and uncultivated life rather than to the delicacies and refinements of a court. Of Helena we know only what is excellent. She was evidently a devoted mother who won the lasting affection and regard of her son. Her later life, when it becomes visible to us, is marked by generosity and religious devotion. Yet, she was unquestionably of humble origin, simple, unlettered, and unacquainted with the subtle niceties of society. Constantine had the vigorous virtues as well as the limitations of his parents and of his times.

The Balkan peasant of to-day retains the crude virtues as well as the uncouth roughness of a remote past. Unswerving in his militant devotion to the Christian religion, he often shows little regard for some aspects of its ethical teachings. Centuries of guerrilla warfare against the Turk, who was also the enemy of his religion, have made him to this day brave and relentless against the foreign invader. The aspects of his religion that chiefly concern him are the elements of power and mystery—the same elements that had magnetic attraction for Constantine. The saints who are revered by the Serbian peasant of to-day are warriors who fought stoutly against the Turk, but who, in most instances, displayed scarcely any of the essentially Christian virtues. Yet the virtue of chastity is held in high esteem. There may be no traceable connection between the race of which Constantine sprang and that of the people who now live in Balkan lands. Yet the type persists. Superstitions of pagan origin survive after many centuries of Christianity. The Balkan peasants of to-day are a vigorous type, animated by many a fine impulse, profuse in hospitality, yet capable of intrigue and violence, of duplicity and cruelty. However much new blood may have entered into the Illyrian provinces since the fourth century, the race of which Constantine sprang had many traits in common with the Balkan peasant of the present day.

The age in which Constantine lived was marked by cruelty, vice, and corruption. In Rome the austere virtues of the republican days had long since disappeared. For a long time the emperors had come from remote provinces—the best of them brave but unprincipled warriors. Throughout the Empire Oriental cults had frequently debased the morals of the people by encouraging debilitating vices. Neo-Platonism had degenerated into a system that was able to justify the most debased superstitions of the past. The decay of the towns, the breakdown of industry and commerce, the constant inroads of barbarians, had reduced life in many provinces to a deplorable state. Out of this degenerate and corrupt age there arose several great military leaders who made some progress towards the restoration of the military prestige of the Empire. One legislator attempted to reconstruct with materials already obsolete. There was, however, but a single figure endowed with gifts both mental and martial, who had the determination as well as the energy that were needed to start the Empire on an entirely new course—one that was destined to infuse into it new life and to enable it to continue for many centuries.

This unique soldier and statesman was vigorous, capable, and eminently human. His dynamic gifts both of body and of mind were persistently devoted to positive and constructive ends. He was singularly alone, save for the short time that he was associated with his father. His colleagues were invariably rivals, with whom there could be little cooperation. Yet he was one who was not only anxious that his friends should share his views and his aims, both religious and political, but who sought as well the companionship of men in conference and discussion. Isolated by his position from wide contacts, he was perforce compelled to find the satisfaction of this instinctive desire for interchange of ideas in the members of his consistory, in the companionship of bishops, and in the intimacy of favorites.

There was in him a certain unworldliness and freedom from subtlety which deprived him of sharp discernment and of acute discrimination in his judgment of other men. By nature free from suspicion of others, when convinced that he had been made the victim of the treachery of those whom he had trusted, no doubt elemental passions came to the surface. Cruel he was not; certainly not as judged by the standards of his own age and of the society in which he lived. Like many a self-made man, he was sensitive to flattery and inclined to vanity. Not a tyrant by nature, he was caught in the web of Oriental despotism which seemed the only means for preserving and rendering stable his office. Strongly inclined to humanitarianism, he was compelled to adopt the fiscal measures and the regulation of society which brought only hardship and suffering to the many.

He was deeply religious, but he looked to religion as the means to produce harmony and temporal felicity both in his own personal life and in the Empire for which he was responsible. Incapable of emancipating himself entirely from his native and traditional superstition, he cannot but appear inconsistent as the advocate of Christianity. Lacking the education and the subtlety to cope with intricate problems of theology, he saw no way to restore peace in the Church but through his personal intervention and through enforced submission to a formula, the clear implications of which might be evaded. Incapable of conceiving of a State without an established religion, he inevitably paved the way for a State-controlled Church. Distracted by problems which constantly demanded a solution, he made them the pretext for postponing to the end of his life the definitive step that would have made him a real participant in the life of the Church to which he was sincerely devoted.

The Constantine of Julian's caricature and the figure depicted in the libellous pages of the biased and mendacious Zosimus had no more existence in actuality than had the Constantine of the Donation. Nor did the Emperor whom Eusebius describes as "above the thirst of wealth, superior to sexual desire; victorious even over natural pleasures, controlling, not controlled by, anger and passion . . . perfect in discretion, in justice, in courage, in piety, in devotion to God" ever live as the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. But there was a real Constantine, a virile and energetic man, who retained to the end of his life some of his pagan manners; governed, sometimes by expediency, but generally by definite principles, which were at times more likely to be religious than political; able, astute, but withal never free from human weakness, he did possess to some degree each of the virtues which Eusebius ascribes to him.

Chapter XX

CONSTANTINE AND THE CHURCH

No problem associated with the name of Constantine has given rise to so wide a variety of opinions as the subject of his relation to the Church. A few examples chosen from a vast number of widely divergent views that have been presented during the past century will illustrate this utter lack of unanimity. In the middle of the last century Constantine was pronounced by Niebuhr "a repulsive figure in whom Christianity and paganism were mingled, a superstitious man who pursued his own selfish ends." In the same year appeared the famous work of Burckhardt which began with the well-known assertion that "in the case of a man of genius, to whom ambition and the desire for mastery give no rest, there can be no question of Christianity or paganism; such a man is essentially unreligious." His every act was regarded as dominated by purely political motives; even his laws in favor of Christianity were but to serve the political machinery of the Empire. He may have confused Christ with the Sun-god and thought that He was one of many gods. Almost immediately appeared de Broglie's study of the Church and the Empire in the Fourth Century, in which he showed clearly that Constantine in his effort to repress heresy showed conclusively an attitude quite the reverse of that of one who is utterly indifferent in matters of religion. His personal preference was obvious, while, if religion had been a matter of indifference to him, there would have been no reason to show concern over the rise of one more sect.

In the next decade Theodor Keim advanced the view that, while Constantine was to some degree affected by Christianity, only at the end of his life did he abandon his policy of duplicity, and cease hedging between the two religions. Then only did he come out definitely as a Christian. Zahn represented him as the champion of a vague monotheism until, after his contest with Licinius, he became a Christian. Marquand asserted that he built pagan temples in Constantinople, and that it is uncertain if he ever definitely abandoned paganism and accepted Christianity. Then came Brieger, who regarded his progress towards Christianity as very slow and who asserted that for a long time he was content with a Christian superstition, even after the victory of the Milvian Bridge worshipping a powerful God, Whom he identified at times with the Christian God, at other times with the Sun-god. These various phases of religious uncertainty finally culminated in his baptism at the end of his life.

In the eyes of Duruy he was a calm theist who merely sought to unite his subjects under one belief, the form of which could change, but its basis would be the worship of a single god. He regarded all Constantine's actions as dictated by calculation, never by religious conviction, or even by religious preference. At about the same time Herman Schiller set forth the view that Constantine gradually favored Christianity, at least according it equal legal rights with paganism, while his real policy was to form an official religion that would balance the better elements of both Christianity and pagan monotheism in a comprehensive cult. Meanwhile the essential Christianity of Constantine, despite its defects, was vindicated by Gaston Boissier and by Grisar.

In the last decade of the last century Seeck's studies became a landmark in the field of research with regard to Constantine and his era. He arrived at the conclusion that Constantine was from the beginning favorably inclined towards Christianity;

that he was definitely won over to adherence to the God of the Christians as his luck-bringer during the campaign against Maxentius; while, after that, he not only supported the Church to the point of subserviency, but even attempted to make Christianity the religion of the State as far as circumstances permitted him to do so. Seeck's conclusions are based on probably the most thorough and searching investigation of all the contemporary documents that has yet been made; but his interpretation of the character and motives of Constantine is vitiated by his own attitude of scorn towards the Christian religion. The conclusions of Seeck were harshly attacked by Görres, who, among other amazing assertions, arrived at the verdict that the bloodguiltiness of Licinius was rather less than that of Constantine.

Among more recent studies may be mentioned that of Schwartz, who regards Constantine as sincerely devoted to the Church, but seeking to dominate it as the instrument of his insatiable ambition. The view that Constantine, throughout the years after the victory of the Milvian Bridge retained a personal belief in a religious syncretism is maintained in recent times by Salvatorelli, thus continuing the school of Duruy; while the view of Burckhardt has found almost its only supporter in Geffcken. Among the most recent studies there has been a general tendency to return to the more traditional view that Constantine's conversion to Christianity was genuine, and that his support of the Church was whole-hearted, while his motives were religious to a far greater extent than they were political.

There are four main sources with regard to Constantine's relation to the Christian religion and the motives that were dominant in that relation. They are his well-authenticated acts, his laws, his coinage, and his letters. We have attempted to interpret his acts in so far as they reflect his relation to the Church, as they have been narrated. We have also attempted to see his attitude towards the Church and towards his Christian subjects as it is revealed in his laws. We have arrived at the conclusion that his conversion at the time of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, even though the distinction in his own mind between the God of the Christians and Sol Invictus may not have been absolutely clear at first, and though the element of superstition may have been present in his acceptance of the God Who brought him victory, was none the less real and sincere. His actions after that time show a definite policy of favoring his Christian subjects, even though before his final victory over Licinius, he felt the necessity of preserving a certain equilibrium between the two religions, while his concern with the welfare of the Church was, though at times misguided, none the less based on the desire to see peace among his Christian subjects which would result in the conversion of the people of the whole Empire to the religion which he had adopted. His laws during the earlier period evince the desire to accord to the Christians in the Empire the same legal rights and privileges as those which were enjoyed by pagans, with an occasional attempt to show them some special favor; during the later period they mark a clear advance towards special preference for his fellow-religionists, as well as the desire to make the social conditions in the Empire such that they may live in it comfortably and safely.

Constantine's coinage before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge expressed devotion to pagan divinities, especially to Sol Invictus, often identified with Mars, and to the Dioscuri, as well as to the Genius of the Roman People. After his conversion, at first there is evident a compromise and gradual assimilation, as symbols, such as the Cross or the Christian monogram, which did not of necessity have an exclusively Christian connotation in the minds of his pagan subjects, began to appear. Pagan symbols gradually disappeared, and their places were taken by indifferent legends, such as Beata Tranquillitas. Abstractions, such as Victoria, Virtus, Salus, and Pietas, were also used. Ere long Victoria would become a Christian Angel of Victory. Such symbols as a Cross above a serpent or the monogram Chi Rho, flanked by alpha and omega, were also coming into use. The Christian monogram might be used on one side of a coin, while on the reverse side appeared the invocation to the Sun-god, SOLI INVICTO COMITI. It is significant that in 314 coins were issued in commemoration of Claudius Gothicus, Constantius Chlorus, and Maximian Herculius. On these coins there was no representation of any rite associated with the pagan consecration of the deified Emperor, while the commemorative coins issued by Maxentius at about the same time did not observe this rule. In the same year the Cross appeared on coins issued in Spain, while a little later two Christian monograms are found on the Emperor's helmet on coins minted in Upper Pannonia. The outward evidence of the Emperor's religious profession becomes increasingly manifest, although caution and political sagacity would of necessity require that, in the West, where paganism was strongest, only gradually should the emblems that might offend his Christian subjects disappear, and that in the early stages of transition symbols not exclusively Christian in the eyes of pagans, but readily susceptible of a Christian significance, should begin to make their appearance. The device of the reverse side of the coins probably was left to the choice of the officers of the local mint.

Once he became sole Emperor, as the result of a victory which clearly marked the triumph of the forces of Christianity over those of paganism, Constantine was no longer under the same necessity to exercise restraint. The *labarum,* which had appeared as a flag inscribed with the monogram Chi Rho, held by two soldiers probably representing the two young Caesars, in 317, became more frequent. In the later period also the representations of the Emperor and of the figures around him were shown in an attitude of prayer, with eyes upraised to heaven. Once Constantine felt free to declare himself unequivocally, his coins gave increasing testimony to his faith. Even the image of the Sun-god had disappeared by 323.

Constantine's letters are at once the most intimate and personal evidence of his attitude towards Christianity and the Church, as well as of his interpretation of Christian doctrine. Many of these letters, and in particular those used by Optatus, have been either rejected or their authenticity seriously questioned by different scholars. There would appear to have been insufficient ground for the rejection of any of these documents and, while the letter to Sapor seems at first sight suspicious, its harmony with the other well-authenticated letters of Constantine and with his policy in general and his sense of a mission which included the Christians without the Empire as well as those within, argue strongly for its authenticity.

In the letters that belong to the period immediately after the victory at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine is concerned chiefly with the restoration to the Christians of property that has been confiscated, and with the settlement of the Donatist controversy. In these letters he identifies himself at once, not merely with the interests of the Christians, but with their devotion to the same God. He is deeply concerned for the settlement of the controversy that is raging, because of its harmful effect on the minds of the pagans. He fears that the judgment of God may descend upon him personally, because to him has been entrusted the direction of all human affairs. Hence it would be wrong that the differences that exist among Christians should be kept hidden from him. He had thought at one time that there was no heavenly power which could observe the secrets of his heart; but, far in excess of what he had deserved, God bestowed upon him gifts beyond number and beyond description. Not only does he clearly distinguish between the Catholic Church and those who are in schism, bestowing his favor on the legitimate body, but he regards the very existence of such divisions within the provinces entrusted to him by Divine Providence as a very serious matter. Those who have been unwilling to bring their hostilities to an end have been guilty of forgetfulness, both of their own salvation and of the reverence due to the most holy religion. These men who persist in their divisions have given occasion for ridicule on the part of those who are not Christians, and he is determined, as the servant of God, that they spread no further this evil which may rouse the greatest wrath of the Heavenly Providence. Already he is conscious of a special mission towards the Church entrusted to him by God and he fears the consequences, should he fail in the performance of this mission. Meanwhile his attitude towards his pagan subjects, even though guided by diplomacy and tact in his official acts, as witnessed in his laws and his coinage, becomes more and more outspoken in his letters as he expresses his disdain for their errors and lies.

Constantine's struggle with Licinius was definitely the contest between Christianity and paganism. Eusebius records in his *Life of Constantine* two edicts issued by the Emperor after the conclusion of this conflict. These edicts correspond to the measures he had promulgated in the West after the victory over Maxentius. In the first of these edicts he provides for the restoration of the personal rights of the Christians as well as of their property which had been confiscated. He begins with a review of God's dealings with men, and in particular of His vengeance on the persecutors of His Church, in which he sets forth the same philosophy of history that Lactantius had made the theme of his work on the *Deaths of the Persecutors*. Constantine proceeds then to proclaim his own divinely bestowed mission as the remedy for these evils. He was the one whose services God chose and regarded as suited for the accomplishment of His Will. Beginning from the remote Britannic ocean he had been God's instrument for the scattering of every form of evil, in the hope that through him the human race might be recalled to due observance of the laws of God. Now, in the belief that this most excellent service had been confided to him as a special gift, he has come to the East, which, because it was suffering under still more severe calamities, seemed to demand from him even more effectual remedies. At the same time he is persuaded that he owes his life, his every breath, indeed his most secret thoughts to the favor of the Supreme God. Constantine has made a distinct advance since the time when he had imagined that no divine power could discern the secrets of his heart. Even though the confessors for the faith have no need to depend on human favor, still he feels it incumbent on him to remove the hard necessities that have been laid upon them, and feels that it would be strange indeed if the glory of their character should not become still more bright and blessed under the administration of a prince who is the servant of God.

Again in the second of these edicts, which is a pronouncement on the error of polytheism, and in which he also bears testimony to the inspiration of the example of his own father in humanity and piety, Constantine testifies to his divinely bestowed mission, and prays that he may be the instrument of God's healing for the peoples of the provinces of the East, who are exhausted by protracted miseries. Not without reason does he offer this prayer, since under the guidance of God he has already accomplished measures filled with blessings. He has led his armies to victory under the protection of the sacred sign of the Cross; and still advances to meet the foe protected by the same symbol. Hence he has dedicated to the service of God a soul that is tempered by the love of God's name and the fear of His power, which has already given confirmation to his faith. In this same edict Constantine sets forth his attitude towards those who remain pagans. He earnestly desires and prays for their conversion; but, above all else, he would that, for the common good of the world and the advantage of all mankind, peace should prevail among his people. Those who still persist in error are to enjoy the same degree of peace and tranquillity as those who believe. The principles of the Edict of Milan are to be applied without reservation in the East, but the Emperor's faith and his desire for the conversion of his subjects to his religion are clearly indicated. No one should trouble his neighbor, for it is one thing to enter the conflict for immortality voluntarily, another to compel persons to do so from the fear of punishment. He is genuinely tolerant of paganism, yet not without expressing his own disdain for its errors; in the course of time, as he felt his position more secure, while still tolerant of paganism in theory, he would express his disapprobation more explicitly.

Confronted, on his arrival in the East, by the Arian controversy, Constantine expressed his own purposes for his coming there in a letter to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and to Arius. He had come to establish peace and uniformity in religious belief, as well as in the temporal realm. The latter he had already accomplished; the achievement of the former would bring a desired change in the general course of affairs. It had been his thought, as the one remedy for the Donatist controversies that were still raging, to send to Africa Christian envoys from the East, where the Christian religion arose. This religious controversy in Africa had been his deepest concern and had caused him profound sorrow. Now that sorrow is greatly increased by learning that there is dissension in the East, and that it is concerned with matters quite insignificant. He, therefore, entreats Alexander and Arius, even though they may differ on one point, not to let that constitute a cause of division among them. The unity of doctrine is what they must maintain, and the cause of their difference is trivial. As the servant of God, Constantine would be the instrument, through exhortations, diligence, and admonition, to bring them back to unity. He prays them to restore to him his quiet days and untroubled nights. The scope of Constantine's divinely imposed mission has visibly expanded. It has now advanced into the field of theology. Can there be any doubt as to the reality of that mission in his own eyes, or the deep concern for the internal affairs of the Church that he now felt? Yet his efforts were fruitless.

Determined that the exercise of his special mission with regard to the Church shall issue in the restoration of unity, he summons the Council of Nicaea. The bishops assembled at Antioch had condemned Arius. He could not permit a repetition of this condemnation on a larger scale at Ancyra. The acceptance of a formula by both parties would, in his eyes, bring the solution of the vexed problem. Apparently he was entirely successful. After the Council he writes to the Churches as the fellow-servant of the bishops to announce the satisfactory issue of its deliberations. Still Arius needed to be reconciled to the Church. It was not long before the Emperor found the way. Constantine writes to Alexander, again calling himself his fellow-servant, assuring him that Arius has convinced him of his acceptance of the decrees of Nicaea, and urging him to receive Arius, that unity and peace may be finally established. The obstinacy of Athanasius, who refused to admit Arius to the Church, quite as emphatically as Alexander had refused, became the next obstacle to the Emperor's program for the establishment of peace. He resorts to commands. Still Athanasius remains obdurate. In him Constantine met more than his match. Arius, wearying of delay, threatened to abandon the orthodoxy he had professed. The vehement reply of Constantine becomes abusive. As the man chosen by God he asserts the true faith. He reviles the blasphemies of Arius, but offers to receive him if he will come to him abandoning his madness and imploring divine grace. Constantine is the champion of truth, but peace and unity are still the foremost purposes of his mission. All the Emperor's letters after the Council of Nicaea are still concerned with the peace of the Church and the prosperity of the State which is dependent upon that peace. The attempt to secure that peace would involve the Emperor in more and more assumption of special prerogatives; the banishment of Athanasius, the suggestion of names suitable to him as successor to Eustathius of Antioch; the assumption that mere acceptance of the eirenicon which was set forth at Nicaea, apart from any interpretation of its terms, would form the basis of a unity which the imperial policy might coerce.

Of Constantine's conversion there can be no question. The fact that he employed Lactantius as a tutor for his son Crispus, and provided Christian instructors for his other sons, would seem to be sufficient evidence of this fact. The bitter hostility of Julian was due chiefly to that one cause. That Constantine did not at first—perhaps not for a long time—make a clear distinction in his own mind between the God of the Christians and the Sun-god to whom he had previously given his allegiance, is quite possible. It is quite true that the legend of Sol Invictus remained on his coins until the year of the council of Nicaea, and that the statue erected to him at Constantinople bore the legend: "To Constantine reflecting the justice of the Sun." In the convenient syncretism of Mithraism it had been possible to identify the Sun-god with other deities to suit local traditions. Constantine had at first identified him with Apollo. Later he found the true "Sol Invictus" in Christ. "The Sun of Justice" is a title which Christians applied to Christ. Why should He not, as the One who had brought victory to His servant, be called, "The Unconquered Sun"? The inscription which is said to have marked Constantine's statue at his new capital may, quite obviously, indicate that Constantine did not claim himself to be the Sun, but the one who reflects the splendor of the Sun, that Sun which is Christ. The retention of the legend of the Sun on his coins was evidently due to his desire to perpetuate the claim which Constantine made to base his authority on his descent from Claudius Gothicus, who had used the same inscription as the mark of his devotion to the Sun-god. It is significant that Constantine continued to use this inscription until the death of Licinius, that is, as long as there was any one to dispute the validity of his claim to the imperial office. After that it disappears.

The passion of the Five Crowned Martyrs throws some light on this subject. These martyrs evidently suffered under Diocletian, in the days of his retirement, and were Christian sculptors, who were commissioned by the Emperor to execute certain works, probably for the adornment of his palace at Salona. When bidden to carve a gigantic statue of the Sun, they complied with Diocletian's command; but, when ordered to make a statue of Aesculapius, they refused and were martyred in consequence of their refusal. Apparently the figure of "The Unconquered Sun" must have been regarded as purely symbolic and probably was susceptible of a variety of interpretations; while the statues of the pagan gods were definitely forbidden. It had been through his devotion to the religion of "Sol Invictus" that Constantine was led to the Christian religion. It is quite conceivable that he regarded the symbols of that religion as occupying for him a place analogous to that occupied by the Jewish religion in the experience of countless Christians. There were numerous affinities between the religion of the Sun and the religion of Christ. It was the Day of the Sun on which Christ, as the Unconquered Sun, had risen triumphant over the powers of death. For a long time the Church had not only applied to Christ the title "Light of the World," but had also thought of Him as "The Sun of Justice rising with healing in His wings." It would seem quite unsafe to make too sweeping assertions with regard to Constantine's continued paganism from such questionable evidence as his retention of the legend Soli Invicto Comiti on his coins.

There were, however, evident deficiencies in Constantine's grasp of the significance of Christianity and of its implications. These limitations were, no doubt, due to the inability of the Christian teachers with whom he was in closest contact, to give him adequate instruction in the fullness of the faith which he accepted. Among those who were most active in shaping the Emperor's ideas about the Christian religion there are four whose names must occupy the foremost place. Their conceptions of their religion must inevitably have colored his own to a great extent.

Constantine began with two definite ideas. Christ was the God of power, Who brought victory to His servants, whom the most rigorous persecution had failed to overcome. His enemies had died ignominiously. Constantine, fighting under His standard, and as the champion of His people, had won a great victory against overwhelming odds. His religion was a religion based on bargaining and confirmed by success. One cannot read the *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius without realizing that Eusebius too had accepted the philosophy of success. To him the triumph of the Church was patently the work of God; but Constantine was the divinely appointed champion, chosen as God's instrument to bring His vengeance upon the persecutors.

To a still greater degree is this philosophy of success to be found in Lactantius, whose relation to Constantine's family was particularly close. As a teacher of rhetoric, he had been encouraged by Diocletian to settle at Nicomedia; but, when he followed the example of his own teacher, Arnobius, and became a Christian, he found himself in a difficult situation. Some time later he was appointed by Constantine as tutor for Crispus. Distinguished for his polished style, rather than for the profundity of his thought or the depth of his grasp of the Christian religion, the "Christian Cicero" shows but little knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. In his *Institutes,* he sets forth his own interpretation of the Christian religion and its implications, with a wealth of pagan erudition. In his brief work, to which we have so frequently referred, he develops one sole thesis—the immediate retribution which is visited by God upon those who oppose Him and persecute His servants. It is a simple philosophy and one for which he seems to find ample and satisfactory evidence in the facts which he narrates; but it is not one that reflects wide experience or profound meditation on the ways of God.

Fundamental in Constantine's interpretation of Christianity also is the conception of a power that can and will bring about unity. The attainment of unity had been the result for which Diocletian hoped in instituting the persecution of the Christians. It was the same hope that led Constantine to adopt their religion. Despite the fact that the line of demarcation between the Church and the world had been emphasized by many Christian teachers and would still later find emphatic restatement by St. Augustine, there was a Christian doctrine also that the lawfully constituted civil authority was of divine appointment. In abandoning the style of a god and basing his claim to rule on a legitimate dynastic inheritance, Constantine harmonized his claim to rule with the teachings of his Christian subjects. Releasing one department of life from the control of the State, he still might, with the support of his Christian subjects, whose religion he adopted, gain by peaceful means that which his predecessor had failed to accomplish by persecution. Religious liberty was a small concession as compared with a stable rule over a unified Empire. The element of bargaining was again evident in the confident hope and expectation that God would grant to His servant the unity among his subjects which he sought, in return for the Emperor's support of God's people. In the unified Empire under the sole rule of the Emperor who had accepted the true religion and given it his support, there would also be a certain renovation, which would make the Empire better suited to Christian habitation.

Hence new laws were enacted, which looked to the improvement of society, if not to its regeneration. The edicts, which appeared to Eutropius as superfluous, were aimed to accomplish just this. They did not concern themselves with removing or even improving the fundamental conditions that made life an almost intolerable burden for nearly every class of people in the Empire. They sought a superficial improvement of justice and morality, while the injustice and oppression that lay at the roots of society were left untouched. Imperial bounty would still be the substitute for any serious attempt to eradicate the conditions that made grinding poverty inevitable. Usury, which had been so potent a cause of economic distress, was merely regulated by the authorization of a high rate of interest. Marital infidelity was to be dealt with sternly, but prostitutes were recognized as a taxable class. Externally society would be made to appear more respectable, but inwardly it would remain as rotten as it had been in the past.

The *Institutes* of Lactantius reveal something of the same interpretation of the Christian religion and of Christian ethics that is evident in the edicts of Constantine which were influenced by his acceptance of Christianity. Lactantius has but an incomplete grasp of the divinely revealed mysteries of the Faith of which he writes. His emphasis is on the moral elements in

Christianity. He would appear to have had very slight realization of the fact of original sin. It is to the free play of the natural instinct of humanity, a benevolence which, while, of course dependent upon devotion to God, seems to be regarded as innate in man, that he looks as the mainspring of Christian ethics. In the past the normal working of justice has been impeded by the avarice of men and by their cupidity for secular honors. The freedom for all men to accept the Christian religion and to live by its precepts will inevitably, by gradual steps, bring the realization of a society motivated by a spirit of cooperation, in which conditions will be progressively improved. There will, of course, be external reforms, but there is an entire absence of anything revolutionary. These would seem to be the Christian principles that Constantine adopted in the shaping of his conception of the new state over which he was to reign supreme.

Of the influence of Lactantius in shaping Constantine's conception of the Christian religion there can be no question. Of the brave confessor, Hosius of Cordova, we know too little to speak with certainty. His relations with Constantine were close and intimate, and he, no doubt, was largely responsible for some of the sound principles and policies which were adopted by Constantine, whom he served as the bearer of his letter to Alexander and Arius as well as on various other occasions. Hosius, who lived to be a centenarian, has been accused of weakening in his orthodoxy at the end of his life, but it is very doubtful if he consciously did so. At all events, during the years of his long association with Constantine, he was not only loyal to the Faith but also a wise adviser to the Emperor who was with difficulty steering his course over a troubled sea with the experience of no earlier Christian Emperor to guide him.

There were two others closely associated with Constantine, both bishops and both bearing the name of Eusebius, whose influence seems to have been definitely harmful to the Emperor, who so sorely needed wise counsel and instruction in Christian doctrine and Christian ethics. The bishop of Nicomedia was a typical court prelate, whose favored position with the ladies of the palace gave him an unusual opportunity to gain the mastery over the Emperor and to shape his policies. Eusebius of Nicomedia was willing to resort to intrigue, equivocation and fraud in his attempt to bring Athanasius into disrepute. He had no scruples, at a later time, that would hinder him from disregarding the Canons of the Church when the opportunity came for him to be translated to the bishopric of Constantinople. Ambitious, unprincipled, and unsound in faith, a sycophant of the court whose guiding principles were purely selfish and political, he was one ill suited to set before the Emperor an inspiring example of Christian leadership or to suggest to him the right solution of a vexed problem. His namesake of Caesarea was preeminently a scholar and a man of letters. His close contact with the sufferings of confessors and martyrs should have made him zealous for the truth and earnest and sincere in thought and in act. The tone of his Panegyric on Constantine and of his Oration to the Emperor, his patently fawning adulation of his hero, his willingness to be implicated in the intrigues of his namesake, all indicate that these qualities he lacked. Loyalty to the school of Lucian of Antioch seemed to dominate his theology; personal friendships to determine his principles; insincere flattery to be the means by which he sought to achieve his purposes. If Constantine was deficient in his grasp of Christian faith or Christian morals, it is but just that those who had the greatest opportunity to instruct his ignorance, but who, through inadequate teaching, cowardice, base motives, or evil example failed to do so, should be held accountable for their share of the blame.

It was but natural that Constantine, a Roman Emperor and statesman, who could not conceive of a state without an official religion, should have felt that, as the first Christian Emperor, he held, by virtue of his office, a unique position in his relation to the Church. Whether from moral cowardice or from policy, he lived almost his entire life after his acceptance of Christianity outside the Body of the Church. It would seem that obsequious clergy permitted him to be present at the worship of the Church, perhaps prominent in the very sanctuary—a privilege that was accorded to no other unbaptized person, and a concession which would call forth the rebuke of St. Ambrose for Theodosius. Yet, despite the fact that he did not really belong to the Church, he was, from the time of his conversion onwards, and increasingly so as his contacts with the Church expanded, deeply conscious of being divinely called to a special office to which he later gave the title of "Bishop of those outside the Church," or, he may have meant "Bishop with regard to the external relations of the Church." Just what did this office imply in Constantine's mind?

We have already seen in his letter to Sapor, which is so well attested from other utterances of the Emperor, that Constantine regarded himself as the divinely constituted protector of Christians outside the Empire. He also felt called to exercise his influence for the spread of the Christian religion in other lands. These two functions would seem to be the particular prerogatives of Constantine so far as those outside his own sphere of government were concerned. They had grown out of another principle, which was the fundamental conception of his office. His pagan subjects must be attracted to the Christian religion, if the internal peace and unity of the Empire were to be attained. It, therefore, became the responsibility of the Emperor to make certain that they were not repelled from Christianity by observing strife and confusion within the Church itself. Hence it was an essential duty of his office to be the associate of the bishops in the settling of disputes and the exercise of discipline that was necessary for restoring internal unity in the Church. The Council of Arles, which owed its existence to his own provision, speaks of Rome as the place "where the Apostles daily sit in judgment," while a little later in the letter which St. Athanasius preserves from Pope Julius to the Eusebians, the Pope says: "What we have received from Blessed Peter the Apostle, that I declare to you." Yet Constantine felt that the preeminence and insistence of his unique position justified him in ignoring and abandoning this traditional appeal to Rome, since it was his own unique function as the "Bishop of those outside the Church" to make certain that the pagans were not scandalized by unseemly disputes and divisions among Christians.

When it was made to appear to him that certain bishops were troublesome and dangerous to the peace of the Church, he resorted to exile as again a prerogative belonging to his office. When, after the removal of Eustathius from the See of Antioch, it became necessary to choose his successor, Constantine submitted two names, either of which would be satisfactory as a candidate in the eyes of the Emperor, thus providing the first example of the interference of a secular ruler in the choice of a bishop. He established a precedent that was destined to give rise to constant interference from the secular power in the future, and to lead to a conflict in the West that would persist for centuries, while in the East, in the absence of a really vigorous and unrelenting opposition, Caesaro-Papism, the domination of the Church by the State, could not fail to be established. Rufinus of Aquileia preserves a speech in which Constantine, addressing the bishops at Nicaea, acknowledged that he had no authority over them. "God has made you priests and has given you the power to judge us; so we are rightly judged by you. But you cannot be judged by men." If Constantine did actually pronounce these words, he belied them by his actions. His son Constantius would so interfere with the authority of the bishops that he would have to be reminded by Lucifer of Cagliari that "he was no judge of bishops, but rather should he be obedient to them and their laws; in fact the Emperor Constantius is not even a Christian and appointed by God to rule his people; he is only a heretic and a persecutor." In the West the resistance to Imperial domination was outspoken and vigorous.

When Constantine determined to effect the restoration of the heretic Arius by imperial command, he had erected the foundation on which Caesaro-Papism might be built. Yet he advanced still one more step. In a letter which Eusebius preserves for us, the Emperor has progressed from his earlier toleration to the use of both persuasion and coercion. The heretics and those in schism are to be deprived not only of their places of worship, but the historian relates, by imperial command search was made for their books, which were seized and then, presumably, destroyed. The "Bishop of those outside the Church" has now constituted himself a Congregation of the Index. Must not the office which Constantine regarded as divinely bestowed on him lead inevitably not only to a complete union of Church and State, but to a union in which the secular powers would be in control of the spiritual?

Constantine did definitely accept the Christian religion after the battle of the Milvian Bridge. From that time onward until he took the final step and became incorporated in the visible Body of the Church, more and more his thoughts and words and actions were dominated by the religion he had accepted. That his life was not consistently governed by Christian principles may be quite true. The degree of guilt that was his, so far as concerns the deaths of his close relatives, we cannot know with certainty. But sin has never been a valid proof of failure to accept the Christian religion, or even the proof that there has been no effort to implement the acceptance of Christianity with consistent action. It is only the evidence of human weakness. Sin has, unfortunately, been found in Christians, as well as in pagans, in all ages. Its presence may prove Constantine to have been a weak Christian, an inconsistent Christian. It cannot prove that he was not a Christian. He was thoroughly convinced himself that he had accepted the Christian religion. He devoted much of his thought and his energy to the advancement of the religion he had adopted. He bestowed on the Church many lavish and munificent gifts. He enacted many laws to safeguard and protect his Christian subjects and to try to bring at least certain aspects of life in the Empire into outward conformity with its teachings. His own understanding of the religion he had adopted may have been quite inadequate; his practice of its virtues weak and unsteady. Yet, on the basis of the evidence that now exists, it is impossible to disprove the fact that he himself so clearly asserted.

"It is a bitter thought, how different a thing the Christianity of the world might have been, if the Christian faith had been adopted as the religion of the Empire under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius instead of those of Constantine." So says John Stuart Mill in his well-known essay *On Liberty*. It is difficult to agree with these words. They have a plausible sound, for men have for long been accustomed to regard the lofty-minded philosopher as the ideal of what it was possible for a Roman Emperor to be. Yet, it is impossible to know what another would have done in a position he never was called upon to face. Marcus Aurelius developed in the atmosphere of his Antonine predecessors with the ideal of an emperor who was in a real sense the servant of his people. He had the privilege of literary training and philosophical study in a cultured court remote from the conditions in which the Balkan Emperor of the fourth century spent his childhood and youth. Marcus Aurelius was by natural inclination devoted to lofty thoughts and profound studies. Yet he was but too ready to accede to the request of his pagan subjects and to instigate the persecution of the Christians. Would he have treated his pagan subjects in the same way, had he become a Christian? Although the principle of adoption had been firmly established, he cast tradition to the winds when it came into conflict with his paternal affection, and left the Empire in the hands of his unworthy son who proved to be one of the basest creatures ever to exercise imperial authority. It is hazardous to assert that any other might have done better and have left to the world a nobler conception of Christianity and more salutary conditions for the Church than Constantine did. That we cannot know. He made many mistakes, but he was a pioneer, blazing a trail through a forest beset by many hazards. His decision was obviously not the culmination of a natural evolution in the Empire. He had the courage to declare for the religion of a tiny minority of his subjects, who were hated, despised and persecuted. By so doing he caused a violent interruption in the normal development of life in the Empire and launched it on an entirely new course. Many of the results of Constantine's conversion and of the policies which he adopted proved baneful in the ages that followed. Yet the policies and the conversion of the Emperor are two very distinct things. His conversion emancipated the Church from persecution and set it on the way to victory over paganism. He was the first emperor to recognize the intrinsic power and truth in the Christian religion and to visualize the Empire as one day united under that religion. For that wisdom and vision, if for nothing else, he is deservedly called "the Great."

Chapter XXI

AFTER CONSTANTINE

It is doubtful if Constantine had made definite plans for the successsion in the Empire when death overtook him. He had appointed his three sons Caesars, and had provided a kingdom in Asia for his nephew Hannibalianus, while the Ripa Gothica had been assigned to his nephew Delmatius. Later writers assert that Constantine had left a will in which the Empire was divided among his numerous surviving relatives, but it is doubtful if this was true. He left not only surviving sons, but also brothers and nephews as well; actually his bequest was a royal caste and incidentally a problem. How could this large imperial family be reconciled with the idea of a monarchy? Constantine, who had already introduced so many changes, might also have established the rule of primogeniture. He left, instead, the rivalry that existed between the descendants of Helena and those of Theodora. Apparently this latter group had some staunch supporters at court, including the patrician Optatus and the Prefect Ablabius, who were a little later put to death. It may have been due to pressure from this group that Constantine sought the way of appeasement by granting a certain territory to both Hannibalianus and Delmatius. Probably Constantine's plan for the future was not unlike that of Diocletian: that his sons should divide the Empire, while his nephews were stationed on the frontier. If we could accept the tale related by Philostorgius that a false will was substituted and that Constantine was poisoned by his half-brothers, much would be explained.

The armies declared that they would be ruled only by the sons of Constantine. A general massacre which included all the princes of the line of Theodora ensued. Constantine's two half-brothers, seven of his nephews, Optatus, his brother-in-law, and Ablabius, his favorite, all perished. Only Gallus and Julian, the sons of Constantine's half-brother Julius, and Nepotianus, the son of his half-sister Eutropia, escaped. To what degree Constantius, the first of Constantine's sons to arrive on the scene, was implicated in this slaughter is uncertain. Constantius and his two brothers met on September 9, 337, made a new division of the Empire, and each assumed the title of Augustus. Of these three brothers Constantine II was a Catholic; Constans a Catholic, already baptized; while Constantius, who survived the others and who exerted by far the greatest influence on the history of the Church, remained unbaptized until his death, but threw in the force of his influence in favor of the Arianizing elements in the Church. Possessed of some ability in statesmanship and of a certain graciousness of manner, he was vacillating, conceited and cruel. Under the guidance of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who in 339 became bishop of Constantinople, and influenced as well by the strongly Arianizing sympathies of his beautiful wife Eusebia, his hatred of Nicaean orthodoxy produced a sad chapter in the history of the Church.

The death of Constantine II after three years left Constans for the next ten years master of the West. He was murdered in Spain in 350 by the cavalry of the usurper Magnentius. During the next two years Constantius disposed of both Vetranio, who had been set up in Illyricum, and of Magnentius, who finally committed suicide, after defeat, in 353. The undivided rule of Constantius II, which lasted until 361, was the great opportunity for the Arianizers. The reign of Constantius was marked chiefly by a prolonged and unsuccessful struggle against Persia, by frequent interference in the affairs of the West, as well as by his constant pressure to dislodge Athanasius and his teachings. Not without strenuous resistance in the West from Pope Liberius and the staunch bishops, Eusebius of Vercellae and Lucifer of Cagliari, was he able to bring about the apparent triumph of Arianism, although inwardly it was already well on the way to disintegration. He appears definitely as the lawful heir to the throne by hereditary right. Gallus, who had reigned as Caesar in truly Oriental tyranny at Antioch, had meantime met his well-deserved fate near Pola, where Crispus had been put to death. His brother, Julian, who had been proclaimed Caesar in 355, had, shortly before the death of Constantius, been proclaimed Augustus by the Gallic troops, summoned to serve against the Persians by Constantius, who refused to leave Gaul. Julian, determined to win by force of arms the usurpation that had been thrust upon him by the soldiery, set out towards the East. Sickness prevented Constantius from reaching his rival, and he died without being able to oppose Julian, November 3, 361, after receiving baptism at the hands of Euzoius, the official Bishop of Antioch. Within less than a month Julian had entered Constantinople as ruler of the whole Empire.

Julian had taken part in Christian worship for the last time at Vienne on the preceding Epiphany. His reversion to paganism should not be too great a surprise in view of his early life and his associations with the Christian religion. A lonely orphan from the time that he was six years old, committed to the care of the eunuch Mardonius, who had been the tutor of his mother, he learned a fondness for Homer and Hesiod and the other Greek poets, while at the same time he was subjected to a stern and rigid discipline. Christianity he saw from childhood as the religion that had brought about the murder of all his relatives. Then, sent with his brother into a remote spot in

Cappadocia under constant vigilance and with unworthy Christians to teach him the official religion, he felt a prisoner and, while participating openly in Christian rites and even officiating as a *lector,* he secretly nourished the germs of paganism that he had cherished from the instructions of Mardonius. Then, after six years of this exile, summoned to Constantinople, he had as his tutor, Hecebolius, whose religious professions followed those of the reigning Emperor as consistently as did those of the famous Vicar of Bray. Sent from there to Nicomedia, he circumvented his promise not to attend the lectures of the famous pagan rhetorician Libanius, by procuring notes of all his lectures, and had direct contact with the rites and mysteries of the revived paganism inspired by the later Neo-Platonists. He had already been initiated into the rites of Eleusis when he publicly participated in Christian worship at Vienne and was secretly a pagan at that time. When he entered Constantinople he boldly proclaimed his paganism.

Julian's attempt to reinstate paganism and to discountenance the religion which he had never assimilated but had come to hate was an absurd anachronism. His short reign, which ended with his death in 363, did, however, have a certain beneficent effect on the Church. Constantius had constituted himself the arbiter of orthodoxy to the point of disrupting the public service by constantly summoning the bishops to synods and councils. He had brought such large numbers of the bishops into thraldom to the imperial will, that a cataclysmic force, such as the apostasy of Julian, was needed if ever they were to recover their freedom of action. Yet, despite its weaknesses and divisions, the Church was now too strong to be repressed. Probably Julian did not utter the famous words, "Thou hast conquered, Galilean," but the fact which they express is unquestioned.

The short reign of Jovian (363–364), enormous of stature, kindly and genial, orthodox in faith but not too austere in his morals, was significant chiefly because he was the first Emperor who was actually a Christian and consistently tolerant. Valentinian I (364–375), who succeeded him, was a convinced Christian and a Catholic, but, although chaste in his living, he was the victim of a furious and uncontrolled temper. He also was tolerant of all religions, but his younger brother Valens, whom he associated with him as Augustus, was crude and untutored, Arian in his sympathies, and a cruel persecutor. It was Valentinian who was responsible for the final step of dividing the Empire, assigning the East to Valens with Constantinople as his capital, and assuming the rule of the West for himself, with his capital at Milan. His desire for unity led him to support Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Milan, but he ran foul of St. Hilary of Poitiers who, despite the fact that Auxentius survived him, was largely responsible for the eventual triumph of the Nicaean Faith at Milan under St. Ambrose, who succeeded Auxentius. Meanwhile, in the East, Valens, as the champion of Arianism, was chiefly responsible for its revived activity up to the time of his death at the battle of Hadrianople in 376. His persecution of the orthodox was really the enforcement of the form of Christianity favored by the Emperor on the advice of his Arian friends.

Gratian, who succeeded to the western Empire on the death of Valentinian, was his son by his first wife, Severa. He succeeded to the Empire of the East when his uncle, Valens, died; then became co-Emperor with Theodosius until his death in 383. It was the pressure of the Goths and the Huns that was largely responsible for his associating with him the Spaniard Theodosius, who was given the provinces of the East, with which were now associated for the first time the dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia, an innovation of far-reaching importance, for this new division was made permanent in the final partition of the Empire between the sons of Theodosius in

395, and it corresponded to the line of linguistic demarcation between the peoples who spoke Latin and those who spoke Greek, and also established the system of four Prefectures of Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and the East.

Theodosius, who was baptized in the East, where he was taken ill while prosecuting the Gothic War, definitely sought to make the Nicaean Faith the basis of unity in the Empire and to make the Church the Church of the Empire. Immediately on his arrival in Constantinople, he exiled the Arian bishop, who refused to give his assent to the Nicaean Faith, and issued an edict forbidding the heretics any place to celebrate the mysteries of their faith, or to exhibit "their stupid obstinacy." It was the faith "which the Divine Apostle Peter delivered to the Romans" that he willed that all his subjects should hold. But Theodosius had to learn that, even though he professed and championed the orthodox Faith, the discipline of the Church, as maintained in the West, did not allow the Emperor a privileged place within the sanctuary with the clergy, and that an Emperor was amenable to the same rules that applied to the humblest layman. After the massacre at Thessalonica he incurred the just rebuke of St. Ambrose and was required to submit to a humiliating penance before he could be restored to the Church. He too, had recourse to the traditional method of the East and summoned a Council at Constantinople which, although it marked the victory of Nicaean orthodoxy, also decreed a primacy of honor after the bishop of Rome, to the bishop of Constantinople based, not on its Apostolic tradition, as in the case of Rome, but on the political importance of the city. The seeds of permanent schism in the Church between East and West had now been sown. By gradual steps the Church in the East was becoming a national church and the Patriarch of Constantinople was becoming its head. This tendency would develop as the process of disintegration advanced, and the separation of East and West became permanent with the accession of Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius. In the next century Justinian would devote his life to the restoration of the lost unity of the Empire, but it could never be permanently attained again. He would also be the very embodiment of the ideal of a state church and a church state that was to become typical of the Empire during its continued history in the East.

Constantine's regin was pivotal in the history of Europe and he stands out as one of the few figures through whom momentous changes have been wrought and a new era inaugurated. He has been regarded by some as a mere continuator of principles and methods already initiated by his predecessors, yet it is the revolutionary changes that came during his reign and his decisions, which cannot be accounted for as the result of the spirit of his age, that created the new Europe that came into being in the fourth century. Confronted with the lack of stability in the Emperor's office and his inability to cope with the tremendous problems spread out over so vast an area, Diocletian's answer had been the tetrarchy, with its recognized right of succession for the Caesars. Whether by design or by accident, Constantine left a dynastic family and the Empire was converted into a monarchy. The unity that Diocletian attempted to secure through the persecution of the Christians, Constantine, while still maintaining the sacredness of his office and the outward ceremonial that typified it, undertook to bring about by adopting as his own the religion of the persecuted minority and by definitely releasing from imperial control the religious life of his subjects. Yet, in his very attempt to advance the cause of the Christians he fettered the Church with associations with the State that have continued to menace its life in the East through the succeeding centuries. By his removal of his capital to the East he took the first important and significant step that led ultimately to a permanent separation and to the divergent lines of development in the two great halves of what had been in the past the Roman Empire. The provinces of the West continued to be a part of the Empire down through the invasions of the Lombards, even though communications between East and West were frequently interrupted. But, invaded by barbarians, and its prosperity destroyed, the West looked more and more to the spiritual leadership of the Head of the Church in Rome, who was from time to time under the necessity of adding temporal burdens and responsibilities to the obligations inherent in his sacred office. Meanwhile in the East, as the successor and continuator of the Roman Empire of the past, Greek in language as in spirit, the Empire of Constantinople was destined to continue for another thousand years as a center of culture and learning, a powerful theocratic state which, under its sacred Emperor, preserved to a great extent the organization it had received under Diocletian and Constantine as the great bulwark against Oriental assault, until it fell, sword still in hand, before the final onslaught of the Turks.

So far as concerned the State, Constantine's acceptance of Christianity roused great opposition for a time, but the process that he began was completed in the measures of Theodosius, in the confiscation of the revenues of the temples by Gratian, and finally by their being closed along with the schools of pagan learning by Justinian. Even though St. Benedict might find a pagan temple and pagan worship at Monte Casino when he arrived there to establish his monastery towards the middle of the sixth century, by the end of this century paganism had practically disappeared from the Empire. Already the darkness of barbarism had descended on the Latin half of the Empire, and its subsequent history for centuries is the story of the long struggle of the Church to bring the light of Christian teachings and the vivifying power of her Life to the motley tribes who seized the lands of the Western Empire during the age of the "Wandering of the Peoples." Yet, though shorn of her prestige and reduced to poverty and decay, Rome, bereft of an Emperor, was able more and more to exert her influence as the spiritual center of the world, the Apostolic See, whence went forth the bands of monks and other missionaries who were to convert and civilize the nations of the West.

In the East it was largely the organization that Constantine had given the Empire that enabled it to survive as a center of culture and learning, of wealth and power, a mighty bulwark against the attacks of the forces of Islam for centuries. But the renovated Empire, and that culture which it embodied, was a new creation, for together with the two elements, Latin and Greek, of which it was composed (the former of which was soon obliterated), there was present that new element from Persia which gave to Byzantine culture its own peculiar stamp. All the life centered in the Sacred Palace and the sanctity of the Emperor's person. The Empire that survived through the Middle Ages, with its center at Constantinople, was still the Roman Empire. There had been no definite break with the past, but it was Roman in nothing but in name.

We have already suggested some of the results of Constantine's conversion and of his activities as a Christian in so far as they affected the future of the Church. Almost at once the Church became the outstanding institution in the State. Vastly increased numbers led inevitably to a deterioration in the life of the Church, particularly in the East, where the Church was so closely identified with the State. It is significant that it was the Age of Constantine and the period that immediately followed it that saw vast numbers of Christians flee from the vices and corruptions of the great centers of civilization and culture to find refuge as hermits in the desert. This was the protest of earnest Christians against the decline that had become apparent in the normal life of the Church. A little later the eremitic life would be to a great measure supplanted by the conventual. But, while the monks of the West became the great instruments of the missionary and educational life of the Church, in the East there was little corresponding development of those activities. After a period of vigorous activity in the Iconoclast controversy, the monks of the East, with no development of rule after the time of St. Basil, soon became idle and unproductive members of society. There is no contrast more impressive today than that between Mt. Athos, the great center of Eastern monasticism for the past thousand years, and the great monasteries of the West which have been, and still are, the preeminent focal points not only of prayer and devotion, but of active work in the fields of missionary effort, education, and works of mercy. The Church in the East has never witnessed anything comparable to the rise of religious orders through the ages in response to the successive needs that have become apparent during the long centuries of the Church's life in the West.

We have seen that, with the establishment of Constantine's new capital, the separation of East and West was already foreshadowed. The schism between these two great parts of the Church inevitably followed. The bishops of the East, subservient to the Emperor, would not permanently submit to the Primacy of the Bishop of the abandoned capital. Eusebius of Nicomedia and his party, in their war against St. Athanasius, cleared the way for the destruction of the unity of the Church. During the five hundred years that followed Constantine's reign there were five great schisms between the Church of the East and the Church of the West, covering in all a period of more than two hundred years. Before Constantine selected Byzantium as the site for his new capital, it had no bishop, while the preeminence of the bishop of Rome had been recognized from the earliest times. Of fifty-eight bishops who presided over Constantinople during the five hundred years after Constantine, twenty-one were heretical or supporters of heretical teaching; all but one of them were deposed by the Emperors. The dependence on the State was thus obvious. But the ambitions of these court prelates began with Nectarius, who induced the Fathers of the First General Council of Constantinople to decree that "the Bishop of Constantinople holds primacy of honor after the Bishop of Rome, because it is the New Rome." Their aggressions were almost uninterrupted until the schism was actually consummated under Michael Cerularius in 1054. The ground on which this primacy was claimed for the Bishop of Constantinople was purely political, while Rome's claim was purely spiritual, in preserving and continuing the authority granted by Christ Himself to the Prince of the Apostles.

Constantine's bequest to the Church was a controversy that would endure for four centuries and would bring with it a disunity unprecedented. Religious disputation would become a foremost activity of the Church and of individuals in the East. He bequeathed the causes which could not fail to produce the schism between the East and the West in both Church and State. He inaugurated a policy which brought about the barbarization of the army and the preponderance of barbarian influence in the Empire. The boundaries became less clearly defined and Europe became a single area with a certain degree of uniformity in which the caste system, serfdom and vassalage became generally established. He left baneful results in both Church and State, yet he could hardly be expected to have had the foresight to know what would be the inevitable outcome of his policies and his enactments. Constantine was responsible for many evils; he cannot justly be held fully accountable for them. His measures were well meant, but he could see only immediate pressing needs. The future he so powerfully influenced was far beyond his vision. Yet, despite his many ill-advised measures, he does deserve full credit for the prolonged life of the Empire, as well as for the liberation of the Church from persecution and oppression. He could not be expected to realize that he was, at the same time, forging new chains by which to oppress her. It is impossible to account for Constantine on the basis of the spirit of his age or as the natural result of influences already at work. He was one of the few challenging figures in the history of the world, who can be accounted for only on the basis of his own originality and genius. Few men have been able to create a new world to the extent that he did.

NOTES

No bibliography is included in this book, for extensive bibliographies are readily available for the scholar, while, for the average reader, they are superfluous. Instead, a few easily accessible works, chiefly in English, are suggested in connection with certain chapters, for the benefit of the general reader who may wish to pursue further a particular topic. The chief source material for the various chapters is indicated; quotations from modern writers are identified; and indebtedness to the work of recent scholars is acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

Page 5. Hodgkin: *Italy and her Invaders* (Oxford, 1899), Vol. vii, p. 153.

Pages 5, 6. Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History* (H.E.), VIII, ii, 3. In all the works of Eusebius which are pertinent to the life of Constantine, the establishment of a Christian empire, through the divinely chosen instrumentality of Constantine, is the dominant idea. The trustworthiness of Eusebius has been seriously questioned by numerous historians of modern times. Seeck refused to make any use whatever of the *Life of Constantine* (V.C.), declaring that "nothing has so prejudiced the memory of Constantine as Eusebius' Book of Lies." Burckhardt calls him "the first historian of antiquity who was dishonest through and through." Such judgments are unquestionably extreme and unwarranted. With regard to the *Ecclesiastical History,* there can be no question about its importance and general dependability. The letters and documents which are quoted in it have nearly all, at one time or another, been questioned; yet serious and careful historians and scholars have accepted the credibility and genuineness of all of these letters, edicts, etc., with possibly two or three exceptions.

Eusebius' historical instinct is evident in the corrections in dates that he makes in his Ecclesiastical History. In the so-called *Life of Constantine* we are dealing with a different type of writing. The author quite obviously does not regard it as a biography. Ranke considered it a Testimonial, and urged that the deviations to be found in it from statements in Eusebius' earlier works be not pressed. There is doubtless a considerable element of truth in the judgment of Crivellucci (*Della Fede Storica di Eusebio nella Vita di Costantino*) that it is the picture of a model emperor, after the manner of the Cyropaedia of Xenophon. The thought is fundamentally messianic, and the emperor who made possible the establishment of the Church in the Empire is conceived after the model of David, rather than after that of an Oriental ruler. This is still more evident in Eusebius' Panegyric on the Emperor, but the theory should not be pressed too far. The figure of the Emperor is unquestionably idealized, and the messianic conception dominates the delineation of his character and works; yet the skeleton of the work is unquestionably a selected series of authentic events in Constantine's life. The conservative estimate of Duchesne would appear to be sound, viz. that Eusebius' "enthusiasm for Constantine shaped the *Vita Constantini* which served both to hide the murder of Crispus and to expose Nicaea without a word of Arius." He calls it "a triumph of reticence and circumlocution."

Prof. Henri Grégoire (*Byzantion,* tome XIII, 1938) has shown, from the fact that it is not mentioned by St. Jerome among the works of Eusebius, as well as from the type of historical errors that it contains, the improbability that the *Vita Constantini,* in the actual form in which it has come to us, is from the pen of Eusebius. This would appear to be quite evident, but Eusebius was undoubtedly responsible for the main body of the work, as well as for the documents which it contains. M. Grégoire's ascription of the authorship to Euzoius, bishop of Caesarea who inherited the library of Eusebius, is a clever hypothesis, but incapable of proof from evidence now existing. He regards the V.C. as a Christian pendant to the *Historia Augusta,* a definitely anti-Christian document. The letters and edicts contained in the V.C. have been subjected to a searching critical study, and are generally regarded as authentic. It is these letters and edicts, as well as those contained in the H.E. which constitute our best evidence for Constantine's acceptance of Christianity.

Page 6. The discussion regarding the Lactantian authorship of the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (de mort. pers.) and its historical dependability has been a protracted one. No conclusive arguments from either external or internal evidence have been sufficiently cogent to induce one to abandon either the ascription of the authorship to Lactantius or seriously to impugn its historicity.

Page 10. Optatus, bishop of Mileve in Numidia, c. 370, issued a work against the Donatists, with an appendix of documents which have been subjected to careful study by Duchesne. There would appear to be no valid reason for rejecting these documents.

CHAPTER I

Page 14. Cassius Dio. LIII, xvii, xviii, 1, 2.
Page 26. Cyprian: *ad Demetrianum,* III.
Page 27. Eutropius: *Epitome,* IX, ix.
Page 33. Tacitus: *Historiae,* I, xvi.

CHAPTER II

Page 40. Strong: *The Underground Basilica at the Porta Maggiore.*

Page 43. Tacitus: *Annales,* XV, xliv.

Page 44. Pliny: *Epistulae Traiani,* X, xcvi, xcvii.

Page 53. Dionysius of Alexandria apud Eusebius, H.E., VI, xli, 11, 12.

Pages 54–55. Cyprian: *De Lapsis,* III.

Page 57. Tertullian: *Apologeticus,* iv.

For the most recent findings regarding the Oriental cults in the Empire I am indebted to the article by Prof. A. D. Nock, "The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire," in Vol. XII of the Cambridge Ancient History.

CHAPTER III

Page 66. Aeneid, X, 830.

Source material: *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*: Vopiscus: Numerianus, xv; Carus, xiii, 1. Eutropius, *Epitome,* IX, xviii, xix, xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares,* XXXIX, XL, XLI, 1, 2, 3; Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* vii, ix, xi, xiv, xv; Eusebius, H.E. VIII, ix, 7; xi, 2; xii, xiii, xiv; also ii–vi; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, xi, 10. For the Canons of the Council of Illiberis, Mansi, ii, 5–19; Hefele, *Conciles,* 1, 212–264. Optatus, i, 22.

Page 82. A. J. Mason: *The Persecution of Diocletian* (pp. 275–276) has a theory that the decree against the Manichaeans was not from the hand of Diocletian, but was promulgated by Galerius and Maximin Daia, who made use of Diocletian's name. He would date it to 308.

Pages 92, 93. Burckhardt, who was convinced that the entire change in Diocletian's policy was due to the discovery of a plot among the Christians, is not convincing. It is, of course, quite possible that such a plot may have existed among a small group of those who fully realized the dangers they had to fear from Galerius. To assume, however, that Diocletian would have been certain to detect its true author, had Galerius been responsible for the second fire, is absurd. (Burckhardt, *Zeit Constantins des Grossen,* both in earlier edition, Basle, 1853, and in 2nd and improved edition, Leipsic, 1880.) The mastery that Galerius was gaining over the mind and purposes of Diocletian is patent. The persecution was quite clearly his plan, and he was ready to resort to all devices to achieve his purpose. The fact that he was the real author of the persecution would appear to be self-evident, and such has been the verdict of most modern scholars; yet so eminent a scholar as G. Boissier (*La Fin du Paganisme*) attributes the initiative to Diocletian, who, "of servile blood, had all the sentiments of the ancient Romans: had conserved both the nature of the *princeps* and the old traditions and respect for the past as the safety of the state." It is a question on which one would do well not to be too dogmatic.

Page 96. Through the centuries the Church has had to restrain the overzealous fanaticism of those who sought martyrdom for themselves. There is an interesting modern instance in J. P. Thoonen, *Black Martyrs* (Sheed & Ward, N. Y., 1941), in which it is most impressive to note the parallel between the causes of the persecution and the general situation at the court of a barbarous African chief in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and those which existed at Diocletian's court at Nicomedia at the beginning of the fourth century. In the case of the African chief it was the presence of sins in his own life, which he realized that he would be expected to abandon if he became a Christian, that was the real cause of his determined policy in inaugurating the persecution of the Christians. Is it possible that this may have been the unrecorded explanation for the alteration of Diocletian's policy, or, at least, the deciding element which induced him to abandon his former leniency? The same influence that had made his wife and daughter sympathetic to the Christian religion may also have influenced him to consider abandoning his paganism. There may have been something more than the determination of Galerius that was responsible for his decision to remove the Christians from the Empire.

Chapter IV

Source material: Eusebius, V.C., I, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii. Eutropius, Epit., X, 1. Anon. Vales., ii, 3. Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* xxv, xviii. With regard to Constantine's escape from the court of Galerius: Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* xxiv; Zosimus, II, viii; Anon. Vales., ii, 4; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares,* XL, ii.

Quotations: Page 108. Hippolytus, *Refutatio,* IX, vii. Page 110. Geoffrey of Monmouth, V, vi (Translation, Sebastian Evans). Page 112. Hakluyt, *Voyages,* 2 (1810), 34. Page 112. St. Ambrose, *de obitu Theod.,* 42.

Interesting and valuable additional material regarding Roman Britain in this period may be found in the article, "Britain" by Prof. R. C. Collingwood, in the Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. XII.

Page 120. For Constantine's personal appearance: Eusebius, V.C., I, xix, xx. Cf. Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* xviii. Cedrenus, 269; Aurelius Victor, *Epit.,* 224.

Chapter V

Eusebius, H.E., VIII, xiv; Zosimus, II, xii; Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* XXIX, XXX. Edict of Galerius: Lactantius, *de mort. pers.,* XXXIV; Eusebius, H.E., VIII, xvii.

Page 146. A. de Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romaine au IV. siècle.*, vol. i, p. 182.

Chapter VI

Eusebius, H.E., IX, ix; V.C., I, xxviii, xxix. Lactantius, *de mort. pers.*, xlii, xliii, xliv; Anon. Vales., xii; Eutropius, *Epit.*, X, iv. For claim of Claudian descent: Eutropius, *Epit.*, IX, xxii; Eusebius, H.E., X, viii, 4; V.C., I, i; Julian, *Oration* I, 6; *Oration* II, 51; Anon. Vales., ix, 1; Panegyrics, V, 4; VI, 2; VII, 2 and 21.

Chapter VII

Lactantius, *de mort. pers.*, xliv; *Eusebius*, V.C., I, xxviii, cf. H.E., IX, ix. Cyril of Jerusalem, Migne Patr. Graec., XXXIII, 1168B–1169B. Zosimus, II, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii; also II, xxix.

Page 177. For the theory that Constantine's conversion was due solely to superstition, see F. Lot, *La Fin du Monde antique,* Eng. Trans., pp. 28 ff.

Chapter VIII

The Edicts: Lactantius, *de mort. pers.*, xlviii; Eusebius, X, v. Pages 184-5. Tertullian, *ad Scapulam,* 2; *Apologeticus,* xxiv and xxviii.

Page 184. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, V, xx.

Page 186. Cicero, *de Legibus,* II, viii.

Phrase in edict, "whatsoever heavenly divinity exists," cf. titles given to God in Eusebius, H.E., IV, xix, and the prayer given by Constantine to his soldiers (V.C., xx):

> We acknowledge Thee the only God: we own thee as our King, and implore thy succor. By thy favor have we gotten the victory: through thee we are mightier than our enemies. We render thanks for thy past benefits, and trust thee for future blessings. Together we pray to thee, and beseech thee long to preserve us, safe and triumphant, our emperor Constantine and his pious sons.

This is evidence, not of Constantine's attempt to institute an all-embracing religion for his subjects, but of the caution, which required him to move slowly, and of his desire to unite his subjects in prayer, as far as was possible.

For the charges of ingratitude and brutality towards Diocletian made against Constantine, based on Aurelius Victor, *Epit.*, xxix, 8, see Mason: "The Persecution of Diocletian," pp. 340 ff.

Page 189. The Maryland Toleration Act of 1649, by the General Assembly of the Province, declares:

"Whereas the enforcing of the conscience in matters of religion hath frequently fallen out to be of dangerous consequence in those commonwealths where it hath been practised, and for the more quiet and peaceable government of the province and the better to preserve mutual love and amity amongst the inhabitants thereof: Be it enacted that noe person or persons whatsoever within this province . . . professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall henceforth be in any waies troubled, molested or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her religion or in the free exercise thereof within this province nor in anything compelled to the belief or exercise of any other religion against his or her consent." Bancroft speaks of Cecilius Calvert as "the first in the annals of mankind to make religious freedom the basis of the State." The toleration extended to other religions in Maryland, however, did not include Jews, Unitarians or atheists. Pages 190, 191. Eusebius, H.E., X, v, 15–17; X, vi, vii.

Chapter IX

The chief authorities for Donatism are the *De Schismate Donatistorum* of Optatus, bishop of Mileve in Numidia, with the appendix of documents on which he depended, and the anti-Donatist writings of St. Augustine, Op. ix in Migne, Pat. Lat., xliii.

Page 194. Tertuillian, *Apol.*, xxi.

Page 211. St. Augustine, *Epist.*, xciii.

Chapter X

Lactantius, *de mort. pers.*, xlv, xlvi, xlvii, xlix, l, li. Eusebius, H.E., IX, x, xi; X, viii; V.C., II, iii–viii; xi, xii, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii. Anon. Vales., iv, 11; v. Eutropius, *Epit.*, X, iv–vi. Zosimus, II, xviii–xxiii; xxv, xxvi, xxviii.

CHAPTER XI

The material for this chapter is found chiefly in Eusebius' *The Martyrs of Palestine,* which appears in nearly all texts between Books VIII and IX of his *Ecclesiastical History;* also from H.E., IX, i–x. Norman Baynes: *Two Notes on the Great Persecution* (Classical Quarterly, XVIII, pp. 189 ff.) has been very useful, and the chronology there suggested has been adopted. Page 237. With regard to the destruction of Eumenia, Sir William Ramsay: *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia,* ii, pp. 502 ff.

Pages 246, 247. For the inscription of Julius Eugenius at Laodicea Combusta, see Prof. W. W. Calder in "Journal of Roman Studies," X.

The quotation from Prof. Ramsay is from *Pauline and Other Studies,* p. 115.

An interesting treatment of the whole subject will be found in A. J. Mason, *The Persecution of Diocletian.* (Cambridge & London, 1876.)

CHAPTER XII

The source material is found in Eusebius, V.C., II, lxi–lxxiii; III, iv–xxiii; lix–lxi. Athanasius: *Contra Arianos* in Migne, Patr. Graec., xxvi; Socrates, H.E., I, vi–xv; Sozomen, H.E., I, xv–xxv; Athanasius: *De Synodis*; Patr. Graec., xxvi; Theodoret, H.E., I, i–ix; xi–xiii; xix–xxi; xxv–xxix; II; Athanasius, *ad Afros,* Patr. Graec., xxvi; *Historia Arianorum,* Patr. Graec., xxv.

Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century* will be found instructive for a further survey of Arianism. Among more modern works Gwatkin's *Studies in Arianism* is to be recommended.

Pages 283, 284. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy,* pp. 184, 185.

CHAPTER XIII

Eutropius, *Epit.,* X, vi; Zosimus, II, xxix; Aurelius Victor, *Epit.,* xli; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, xi, 20; Philostorgius, II, iv; St. Jerome, *Chron.;* Sozomen, I, v; Socrates, H.E., I, xxv; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.* V, 8; Gregory of Tours, I, xxxvi; Zonaras, II, vi; St. Chrysostom, *Homily ad Philippenses,* xv.

Page 293. Although Philostorgius uses the word "mother-in-law," he is unquestionably speaking of Fausta. His inaccuracy and undependability are quite evident, but the traditions he records may have definite value. This particular one, at all events, has been widely accepted.

CHAPTER XIV

Pages 309, 310. An interesting discussion (with which it is difficult to agree) regarding the legends associated with the founding of Constantinople and the dedications of Constantine's churches there, will be found in V. Burch, *Myth and Constantine the Great,* Oxford, 1927.

Page 312. For the question regarding pagan temples at Constantinople see M. A. Huttmann, *The establishment of Christianity and the Proscription of Paganism* (Longmans, New York 1914), where all references are fully listed.

Pages 321–322. Quotation from E. A. Grosvenor, *Constantinople,* Vol. I, p. 330.

Page 329. Tertullian de Praescript Haeret, vii.

CHAPTER XV

Anon. Vales, vi; Eusebius, V.C., IV, v–vii; xxxii, xxxiii; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares,* XLI, 11; Eutropius, *Epit.*, X, vi, 3; Julian, *Oration* I, 15; Zosimus, II, xxviii; *Letter to Sapor* in Eusebius, V.C., IV, ix–xiii; Eusebius, *Oratio:* Constantine: *Oratio ad Sanctos.*

Page 327. Tertullian, de Praescript. Haeret., vii.

Page 345. For "Clinics," see Rufinus apud Eusebius, H.E., VI, xliii; Hefele, *Conciles,* I, i, 333.

CHAPTER XVI

Eusebius, V.C., II, l, li, liii; II, xix–xlvi; III, liv–lviii; IV, xxxviii, xxxix. For the churches and benefactions in the Holy Land, Eusebius, V.C., III, xxv–liii. For the churches at Rome see H. Grisar, *History of Rome and the Popes in the Middle Ages,* Vol. I, pp. 188 ff. For churches elsewhere see Eusebius, V.C., III, l; Theodoret, H.E., II, xxxi; Socrates, H.E., II, viii and xvi. See also with regard to the legendary element V. Burch, *op. cit.* The laws are in the Theodosian and Justinian Codes. Interesting comments on the contemporary excavations at the tomb of St. Peter were contained in the address of Ascension Day, 1942, by His Holiness Pope Pius XII. *The Bordeaux Pilgrim* is in Migne, Pat. Lat., viii. The *Itinerarium Egeriae,* ed. Heraeus and Morf, is published by Winters, Heidelberg, 1929; it is translated with notes by McClure and Feltoe, S.P.C.K., London, & Macmillan, N. Y., n.d. For Telemachus, see Theodoret, H.E., V, xxvi.

CHAPTER XVII

On the development of the legend, see C. B. Coleman, *Constantine the Great and Christianity.* N. Y., 1914, chapters v and vi.

Page 369. The legend of Barlaam and Josaphat is actually a legend of Buddha. It found its way into Europe in Greek in the writings of John of Damascus, and was later incorporated among the Lives of the Saints in the *Legenda Aurea* (CLXXX) by Jacobus a Voragine.

Pages 369–370. On the theory of the Romano-Sabine origin of the Constantine-Sylvester legend, see Burch, *op. cit.*

Pages 370 ff. On the "Constitutum" the articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., and the Catholic Encyclopaedia (Donation of Constantine); Prof. Halphen in Cambridge Mediaeval History, Vol. III, art. "The Church from Charlemagne to Sylvester II"; A. J. Carlyle, *Mediaeval Political Theory in the West,* Vol. I, pp. 290 ff.; and an article in the English Historical Review, Vol. IX, 1894, p. 632, provide ample material.

Pages 378 ff. On the False Decretals the articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. VII, pp. 915–917, as well as in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. VIII, p. 116; also Vol. IX, pp. 345 ff., 349; Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law,* Vol. I, p. 17; G. H. Davenport, *The False Decretals,* 1916; also the series of articles by Paul Fournier in the Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, Jan. 1906–Jan. 1907, may be consulted.

Page 379. For the theory that the Decretals were the work of Ebbo of Rheims, see an article in "The Month," March 1881, by Richard F. Clarke.

Pages 374–375. Quotations: Dante, *Inferno,* xix, 115–118 (Trans. J. A. Carlyle); *Paradiso,* xx, 56, 57. (Trans. P. H. Wicksteed). Walther von der Vogelweide, 85, quoted by H. O. Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind* (N. Y., 1930), Vol. II, p. 62. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso,* xxxiv, 80 (Trans. W. S. Rose).

Page 376. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders* (Oxford, 1899), Vol. VII, pp. 151 ff.

CHAPTER XVIII

Excellent articles on the organization of the army, the court, and the administrative and financial service under Diocletian and Constantine will be found in The Cambridge Mediaeval History, Vol. I (The Reorganization of the Empire, by J. S. Reid, Litt. D., pp. 24 ff.; in Parker, *A History of the Roman World from A. D. 138 to 337,* pp. 262–290; also Bury's notes to Gibbon, and in F. Lot, *La Fin du Monde Antique* (Eng. trans.), pp. 86–134.

Page 381. For the theory that Constantine was a continuator rather than an originator, see Hans von Schoenbeck in *Klio,* Beiheft xliii, 1939, Neue Folge, Heft. 30.

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CHAPTER XIX

Julian, *The Caesars,* 315 ff.; *To Heracleios,* 227 C., *Panegyric in honor of Constantinus,* 7, 8; Eusebius, V.C., IV, xxxi, li, liv. Theodoret, H.E., I, xxxiii; Zosimus, II, xxix; Aurelius Victor, *Epit.,* XLI, 16, cf. XLI, 14; Eutropius, *Epit.,* X, vii, viii; Eusebius, V.C., IV, lxxv; Eusebius, *Oratio,* V, iv.

Page 417. Quotation from C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Pagan Culture,* Oxford, 1940, *passim.*

CHAPTER XX

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"Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Constantins," ibid. XXXI (1888), Vol. I, pp. 72–93.

"Das Edikt von Mailand," ibid. (1892), pp. 282 ff.

Salvatorelli: La politica religiosa degli 18 imperatori romani e la vittoria del cristianesimo sotto Costantino in Saggi di storia e politica religiosa (Città di Castello, 1914, pp. 101–124); Rivista storica italiana, N.S. 5 (1927), pp. 166–179; Costantino il Grande (Profili, No. 103), Formiggini, Rome, 1928, and La politica reli-

giosa e la religiosita di Costantino in Ricerche religiose 4, (1928), pp. 289–328.

Geffcken: Aus der Werdezeit des Christentums (Leipsic, 1904).

CHAPTER XXI

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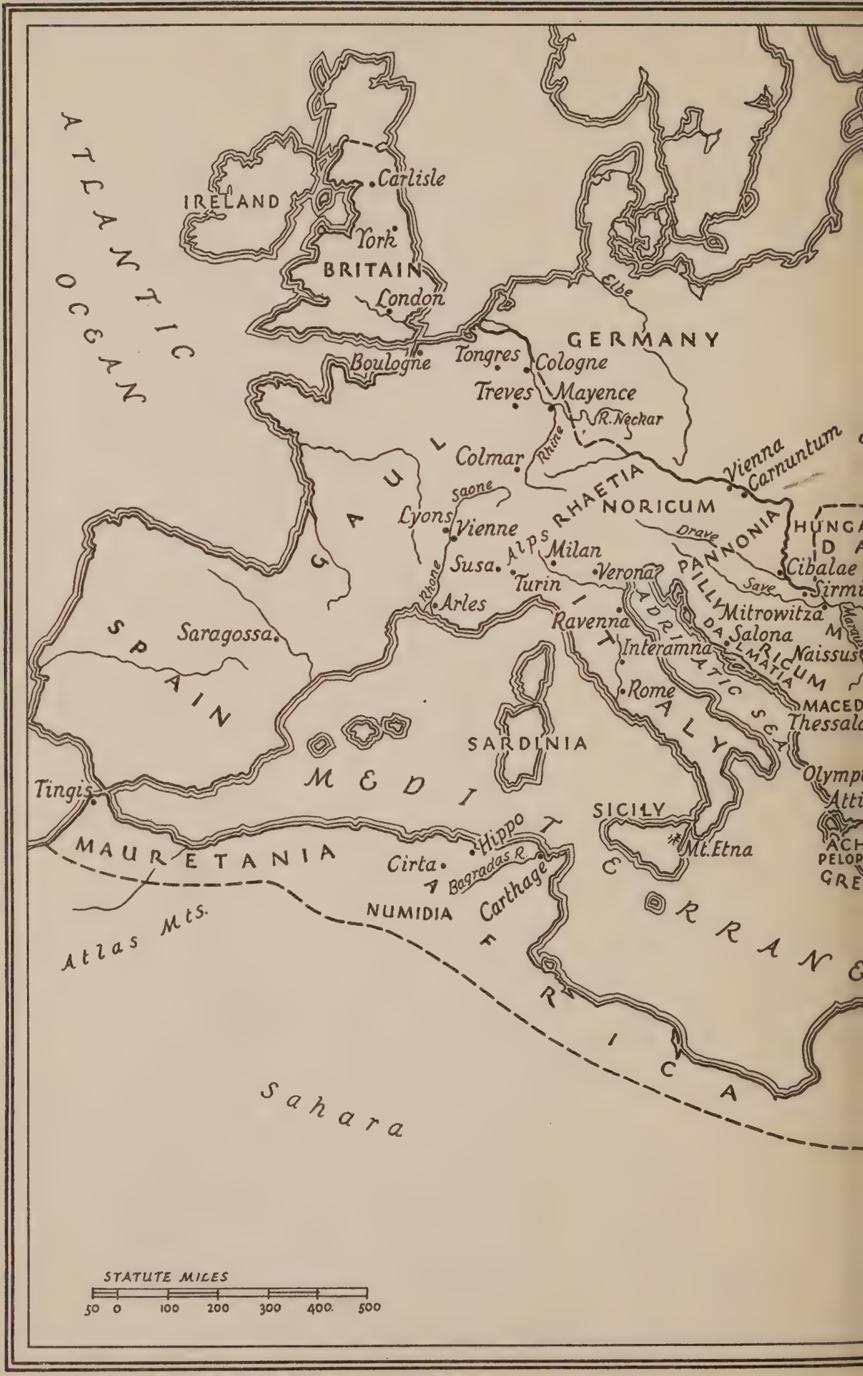
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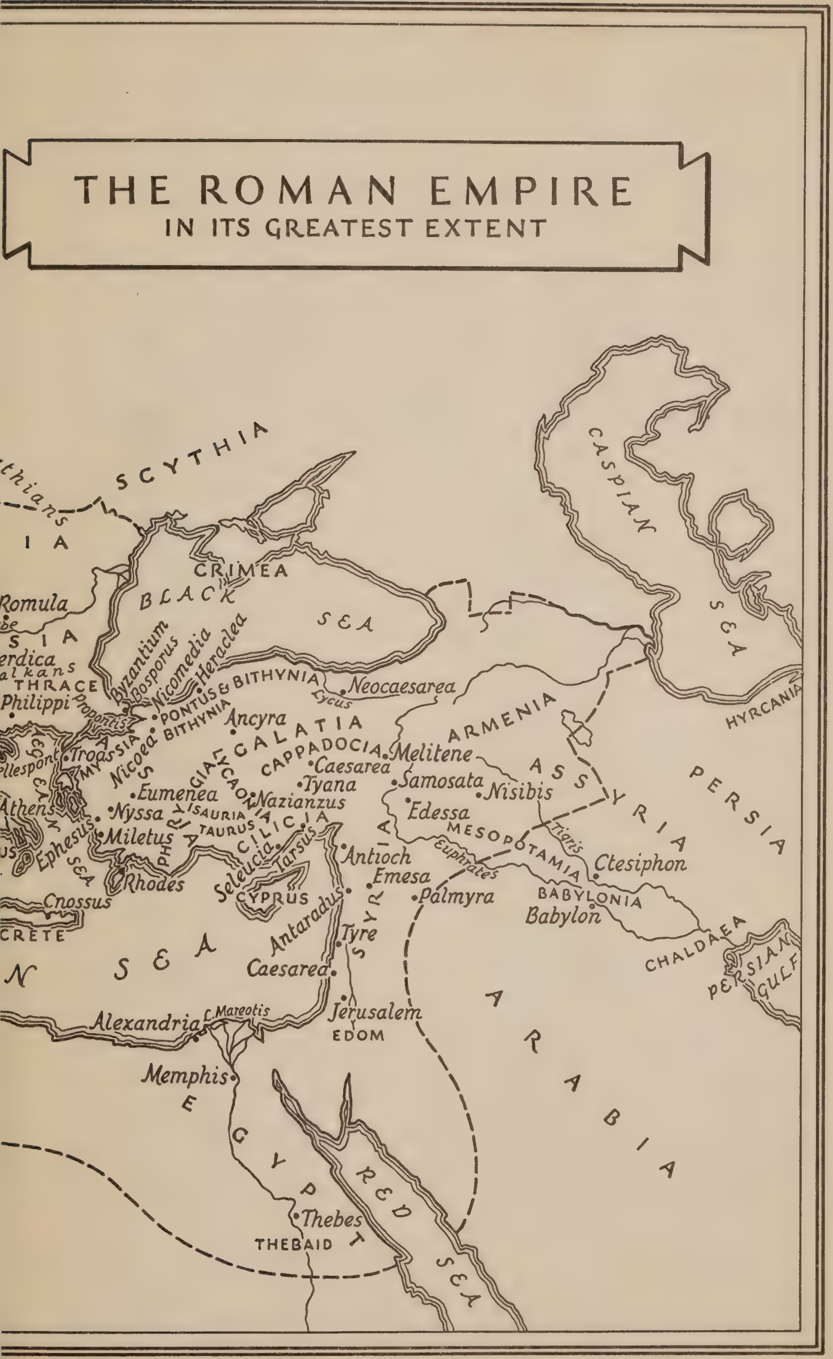

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
IN ITS GREATEST EXTENT

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SCYTHIA
IA
CRIMEA
BLACK
SEA
Romula
SIA
erdica
alkans
THRACE
Philippi
Byzantium
Bosporus
Nicomedia
Heraclea
Propontis
PONTUS & BITHYNIA
BITHYNIA
Neocaesarea
Lycus
Ancyra
GALATIA
llespont
Troas
MYSIA
ASIA
Nicoea
CAPPADOCIA
Melitene
ARMENIA
Caesarea
Tyana
Samosata
Nisibis
ASSYRIA
PERSIA
HYRCANIA
CASPIAN
SEA
Eumenea
PHRYGIA
LYCAONIA
Nazianzus
Nyssa
ISAURIA
TAURUS
CILICIA
Tarsus
Athens
AEGEAN SEA
Ephesus
Miletus
US
Rhodes
Seleucia
CYPRUS
Antioch
Edessa
MESOPOTAMIA
Tigris
Euphrates
Ctesiphon
Emesa
Palmyra
BABYLONIA
Babylon
CHALDAEA
PERSIAN GULF
Cnossus
CRETE
Antaradus
SYRIA
Tyre
N
SEA
Caesarea
Jerusalem
EDOM
ARABIA
Alexandria
L. Mareotis
Memphis
EGYPT
RED SEA
Thebes
THEBAID

INDEX

This Index includes the names of persons mentioned in the text except the authors, ancient and modern, whose works are quoted, and the names of Constantine the Great, Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Constantius Chlorus, Severus, Maximin Daia, and Licinius. The former will be found listed in the Notes to the various chapters and the quotations from their works identified; the latter are fully indexed in the analytical summaries of the various chapters in the Table of Contents. It also contains the names of all places referred to in the text.

Abelius, 128
Ablabius (Prefect), 335, 410, 444, 445
Ablavius, 294
Adauctus, 82
Adrianople, 213, 227, 228
Aedesius, 237
Aegyptius, 170
Aelafius, 203
Africa, 129, 139, 145, 148, 190, 194 ff, 207
Agnes (martyr), 231
Alemanni, 29, 78, 227, 329
Alexander (the Great), 12, 22, 161, 342
Alexander (Bp. of Alexandria), 258, 430, 431
Alexander (L. Domitius), 139, 140, 145
Allectus, 78
Alpheus, 236
Amandus, 228–231
Ambrose (St.), 4, 112, 439, 448, 449
Anastasia (half-sister of Constantine), 118, 172, 219
Anastasia (daughter of Constantine), 359
Anthimus (Bp. of Nicomedia), 116, 241
Anthony (St.), 245
Antioch, 91, 241, 243, 272, 273, 358
Antonius Pius (Emp.), 19, 35
Anullinus (Prefect of Rome), 128, 130: Pro-consul of Africa, 190, 198, 200, 201
Aper, 31, 65, 66, 401
Apollonius of Tyre, 47, 48, 87
Apphianus, 237
Arelate (Arles), 123, 205, 206, 440
Argaragantes, 329, 330
Arianism, 257, 270, 271, 281–284, 317
Arius, 62, 241, 258–261, 264, 266, 268, 270–273, 277–279, 290, 317, 324, 430–432
Armenia (Kingdom of), 76, 92, 212, 246, 247, 333
Arsenius, 274, 276
Ascarius, 125
Ascesius, 268, 269
Asclepiodotus, 78, 110
Asterius, 260
Athanasius (St.), 7, 264, 270, 271, 273–280, 290, 431, 446
Augustine (St.), 7, 52, 60, 138, 200, 209, 211, 314, 339, 345, 411, 435
Aurelian (Emperor), 28, 29, 35, 51, 58, 67, 70, 80, 83, 108
Aurelius, Marcus (Emperor), 19–

21, 33–35, 45, 46, 81, 85, 442, 443
Auxentius, 237

Bagaudae, 73, 124
Bassianus, 219, 220–223, 291
Bassus (martyr), 94
Britain, 74, 78, 93, 106–107, 116, 120–124, 206, 227
Byzantium, 29, 213, 229, 302, 304, 307, 308

Caecilianus (Bp. of Carthage), 190, 198–209
Caesar, Julius, 12–15
Callistus I (Pope), 108
Caracalla (Emperor), 21-23, 35, 47
Carausius, 74, 76, 78, 102, 124
Carinus (Emperor), 30, 31, 68
Carnuntum, 135–137
Carus, Aurelius (Emperor), 30, 65, 67–73
Carpi, 25, 76
Carthage, 150, 208
Chrysopolis, 231
Chrysostom (St.), 287, 295, 319, 411
Cicero, 184, 186, 382
Circumcelliones, 210
Cirta (Constantine), 200, 209, 210
Claudius, Gothicus (Emperor), 28, 29, 77, 111, 143, 432
Codinus, 294, 311, 312
Coel (Duke and King), 110–112
Commodus (Emperor), 20, 21, 35, 45, 49
Constans (son of Constantine), 288, 293, 335, 342, 445
Constantia (half-sister of Constantine), 87, 118, 152, 191, 264, 268, 270, 271, 290, 295
Constantia (daughter of Constantine), 334, 359
Constantine (Donation of), 4, 370, 378
Constantine II (son of Constantine), 176, 223, 225, 278, 285, 288, 289, 293, 329, 335, 342, 445
Constantius I Chlorus (Emperor), 30, 75, 77–79, 93, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 118–120, 122, 124, 417
Constantius II (son of Constantine), 224, 280, 288, 289, 293, 296, 319, 329, 332, 333, 335, 342, 347, 361, 441, 445
Constantius, Julius (half-brother of Constantine), 118, 445
Crispus (son of Constantine), 6, 114, 164, 171, 176, 223–225, 227, 230, 231, 285, 288, 291–294, 297–300, 328, 386, 401–403, 432, 435
Cybele (rites of), 49, 123
Cyprian (St., Bishop of Carthage), 26, 27, 52–55, 57, 59

Decius (Emperor), 25, 26, 45, 52, 84, 133–137
Delmatius (half-brother of Constantine), 118, 410
Delmatius (nephew of Constantine), 274, 330, 334, 335, 341, 444
Dionysius (Pope), 59
Dionysius (Bishop of Alexandria), 53, 59
Dominus (martyr), 237
Domitian (Emperor), 17, 70
Domitianus, L. Domitius, 113
Donatus (Bishop of Casae Nigrae), 203, 204, 207, 208
Donatus (successor of Majorinus), 209, 210
Drepanum (Helenopolis), 108, 113, 343

Elgabalus (Emperor, Bassianus), 23, 47
Elias (Bishop of Adrianople), 246
Elvira (Council of), 83, 96, 97, 206
Euethius, 91
Eulalia (martyr), 96
Eumenia, 237
Eusebius (Pope), 139, 150, 159

Eusebius (Bishop of Nicomedia), 257, 259, 264, 266–268, 270–273, 275, 280, 281, 289, 328, 347, 367, 438, 445
Eustathius (Bishop of Antioch), 112, 271, 272, 432, 440
Eutropia (wife of Maximian Herculius), 356
Eutropia (half-sister of Constantine), 118, 445
Euzoius, 271, 446

Fabian (St., Pope), 53, 55
Fausta (wife of Constantine), 95, 98, 115, 126, 131, 140, 171, 193, 213, 223–225, 288, 289, 291–294, 296–301, 328, 358, 401–403, 406, 413
Felix (Bishop of Aptunga), 199, 202, 204–206
Firmianus, 236, 238
Franks, 119, 124, 140, 193

Gallienus (Emperor), 27, 28, 51, 58, 71, 104, 183
Gallus (Emperor), 26, 56
Gallus (nephew of Constantine), 445, 446
Genesius, 345
Gesoriacum (Boulogne), 74, 78, 118
Geta (Emperor), 22
Gordian (Emperor), 24, 52
Gordius (martyr), 252
Goths, 25, 26, 329
Gratian (Emperor), 448
Gregory Thaumaturgos (St.), 59, 62, 63

Hadrian (Emperor), 18, 19, 44, 45
Hannibalianus (half-brother of Constantine), 118, 410
Hannibalianus (nephew of Constantine), 334, 335, 341, 343, 444
Helena (Mother of Constantine), 75, 108–113, 241, 258, 272, 289, 290, 293, 294, 296, 316, 343, 347, 356, 358, 368, 417, 418, 444
Heraclea, 213
Heraclius (anti-pope), 139
Hierocles, 87, 88
Hippolytus (anti-pope), 108, 109
Hispellum (Spello), 354
Honorius (Emperor), 365
Hormisdas, 331, 332
Hosius of Cordova, 93, 95, 170, 174, 190, 208, 260–262, 265, 267, 437

Ignatius (St., Bishop of Antioch), 46
Irene (Martyr), 234, 317

Jerome (St.), 4, 7, 293, 351, 361, 411
John Arcaph, 274
John Lydus, 310
John Malalas, 312
Jordanes, 229
Jovian (Emperor), 447, 448
Julia Domna (Empress), 22–24, 46, 47, 50, 51, 87
Julian (the Apostate, Emperor), 8, 52, 143, 151, 171, 226, 244, 319, 325, 403–407, 445–448
Julius Eugenius (Bishop), 247
Julius (Pope), 440
Justin (St.), 45
Justinian (Emperor), 317–319, 450

Lawrence (St.), 57
Legion (Twelfth), 253
Liberius (Pope), 446
Licinius Licinianus, 192, 223–226, 232, 295, 301, 330, 331, 403
Limigantes, 329, 330
Lucian of Antioch, 112, 241, 257, 258, 264, 272, 343
Lucifer (Bishop of Cagliari), 441, 446
Lucilla, 199, 202, 203

Macarius (Bishop of Jerusalem), 264, 356
Macarius (Meletian), 273, 274
Macrinus (Emperor), 23, 25, 56
Majorinus, 201–203, 208, 209
Manichaeism, 60, 61, 71
Marcellinus (priest at Rome), 138
Marcellinus (Pope), 138, 139
Marcellus (Pope), 139
Marcellus (martyr), 86, 206
Marcellus of Ancyra, 263, 278, 279
Marcia, 45
Mardia, 221
Mardonius, 446, 447
Margus, valley of, 68, 79, 98
Martinianus, 231
Maryland, 189 and note
Maurice (martyr), 86
Maximilian (martyr), 86, 206
Maximin (Emperor), 24, 25, 48
Mensurius (Bishop of Carthage), 198, 199
Methodius, 241
Milan, 74, 76, 128, 178, 207, 208, 213, 414
Miltiades (Pope), 193, 202, 203, 204
Minervina, 114, 223, 285
Mithras, rites of, 49, 50, 58, 63, 80, 123, 351, 432
Musonianus, 171

Naissus (Nisch), 106, 113, 306
Neo-Platonism, 51, 52, 63, 80, 243, 336, 419
Neo-Platonists, 87, 234, 266
Neo-Pythagoreans, 40
Nepotianus (nephew of Constantine), 445
Nero (Emperor), 16, 17, 20, 35, 41, 43
Nerva (Emperor), 18
Nicomedia, 74, 75, 83, 88, 89, 92, 97, 100, 113, 115, 117, 149, 240, 241, 250, 344, 358, 414
Numerianus (Emperor), 30, 31, 65, 66, 401
Numidia, 24, 57, 199, 200, 210, 215

Octavian (Augustus, Emperor), 11–16, 22, 32–34, 40, 41, 70
Optatus (Bishop of Mileve) 10 and note, 427
Optatus (brother-in-law of Constantine), 410, 444, 445
Origan, 51, 85, 235

Pamphylus, 235
Paphnutius, 264, 268
Paul of Samosata (Bishop of Antioch), 56, 83, 257, 258, 267
Paulinus of Tyre, 272
Persia, 27, 30, 76, 77, 80, 85, 331, 343, 383, 446
Pertinax (Emperor), 20
Peter (St.), 43, 57; Church of, Rome, 50, 318, 368
Peter (Bishop of Alexandria), 241
Phileas, 238
Philip (the Arab, Emperor), 25, 52
Philip (martyr), 94
Philoromus, 82
Philostratus, 46
Picts, 116, 124
Pliny, 44
Polycarp (St.), 45
Praetextatus, 310
Praetorian Guard, 15, 17–22, 25, 127, 128, 150–153, 157, 158, 384
Procopius, 235

Rausimodus, 226
Regaisus, 125
Roma (goddess), 13, 42, 44
Romanus (martyr), 94
Romanus (deacon of Caesarea), 236
Rome, 109, 116, 127, 128, 132, 137–138, 150, 158, 203, 286–288, 303, 358–361, 414, 419
Romula (mother of Galerius), 87, 88

Romulianum, 148
Romulus (son of Maxentius), 137, 140
Rufinus of Aquileia, 440
Rurucius Pompeianus, 154, 155

Sabellius (Sabellianism), 59, 62, 257, 267
Sabinus, 159, 239, 247, 248
Sapor II (King of Persia), 331, 333
Sarmatians, 114, 226, 329
Saturninus (Bishop, martyr), 55
Sculptors (Five, martyrs), 86, 433
Sebastian (martyr), 86
Secundus (Bishop of Tigisis), 199, 200
Segusio (Susa), 154
Senecio, 219, 220
Septimius Severus (Emperor), 21, 24, 32–35, 46, 56, 70, 122, 164, 308, 320
Serdica, 148, 223, 225, 306
Severus Alexander (Emperor), 24, 48, 183
Silvanus (Donatist Bp.), 209
Silvanus (martyr), 237
Sirmium, 76, 134, 221, 225
Sixtus II (St., Pope), 57
Sopater, 310
Soracte (Mt., Syraptim), 3, 368
Sylvester (St., Pope), 3, 4, 280, 309, 367–370

Tacitus, 33, 43
Tacitus (Emperor), 29
Tarsus, 215
Telemachus, 365
Telesephorus (St., Pope), 45
Tertullian, 57, 61, 85, 92, 184, 185, 193–196, 252, 265, 327
Thamugada (Timgad), 208, 209
Theodora (wife of Constantius Chlorus), 75, 108, 113, 118, 140, 290, 444
Theodosia (martyr), 237
Theodosius (Emperor), 345, 439, 448, 449
Theognis, 257, 264, 268
Theonas, Letter of, 80
Theophanes, 417
Theotecnus, 234, 235, 240, 241, 243–245
Thessalonica, 77, 218, 227, 231, 232, 449
Timestheus, 25
Timotheus, 236
Tiran, 334
Titus (Emperor), 17
Trajan (Emperor), 11, 18, 20, 35, 42, 44, 46, 89, 160, 161, 226
Treves (Treverorum, Trier), 109, 125, 135, 144, 278, 329
Troy, 306
Turin, 154

Ulpianus, 237
Urbanius, 236

Valens, Aurelius Valerius, 221, 222
Valens (Emperor), 448
Valentinian (Emperor), 448
Valeria (daughter of Diocletian), 75, 79, 91, 216–218
Valerian (Emperor), 26, 27, 56, 58, 92
Vergil, 40, 41, 66, 339
Verona, 154, 155
Vespasian (Emperor), 17, 33, 35
Volusianus, Rufus, 145
Vopiscus, 65, 97

Waras (Persian Satrap), 334

York (Eboracum), 118, 122, 123, 124

Zacchaeus (martyr), 236
Zenobia (Queen of Palmyra), 27, 29, 257
Zonaras, 79, 294, 312

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